



# HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

21-Day Devotional

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MINISTRIES

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# HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

## 21-Day Devotional

Have you ever imagined what it was like in the Garden of Eden? Envision standing in the middle of the first garden ever planted with the most beautiful trees, flowering bushes and tiny vegetable sprouts peeking through the ground. The soil was fertile, the weather conditions were perfect and the garden had a full-time caretaker, Adam.

Genesis 2 tells the story of the first garden, *“Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden...the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”* Even from the beginning of time, gardens have required work. He created a helper suitable for Adam, to come alongside him to accomplish God’s purposes. From preparing the soil and planting to pruning and weeding, gardening is a metaphorical exercise in spiritual maturity.

Why did God design the first job on the planet to be that of a farmer and a gardener? Perhaps to teach his most prized creation, mankind, about life with the Creator. Scripture abounds with analogies and parables centered on gardening themes. From seed to harvest, there are amazing spiritual lessons to learn in the great outdoors. We’ll take a deeper look into our hearts and discover some of God’s truths about the life of a believer – with a gardening flair!

Put your gardening shoes on, grab your work gloves and let’s get *growing!*



# HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

## Day 1: First Things Fertile

Starting a garden would be easier if I could go outside and simply scatter seeds with no regard for where they land. Just imagine how much time could be saved. No digging up the soil, no need to add compost and no worrying about seeds that fall on the sidewalk or in the weeds. Oh yes, I could have a beautiful garden if that were the case!

It isn't quite *that* easy. To begin a garden, the first thing you must do, even before a single seed goes into the ground, is prepare the soil. The condition of the soil is paramount to a thriving garden. The healthiest soil comes from compost -- decayed organic matter used as plant fertilizer. Essentially, the most fertile soil is full of dead, decomposing stuff. Seeds planted in fertile soil will grow. Seeds planted in hard, rocky soil will struggle to survive.

Consider our Christian walk. Scripture often compares our spiritual growth to plant life. **In order for us to grow spiritually, we must first have a heart prepared to receive God's truth – fertile and willing to accept it.** Then, when it takes root in our heart, He does a mighty work in us to accomplish His purpose in our life.



What is the condition of your heart? Is it fertile ground to receive the truth of God's Word? Let the precious message of Christ be planted in the richness of your surrendered heart today.



Read the parable of the four soils in **Mark 4:1-20**.

List the four kinds of soil mentioned in this parable.

Which soil actually produced fruit? Describe the kind of heart this represents.

How can you prepare to receive His Word and let it grow in your heart?

Write a prayer asking God to make your heart ready to receive His truth that it may grow to maturity!

See also:

**2 Corinthians 5:17**

**2 Corinthians 4:16**

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## Day 2: The Necessity of Water

I'm fascinated by seeds. Those tiny things stay dormant in the package, hanging on a shelf, for months, but within days of putting them in fertile soil with a little water, they begin to grow. What triggers this transformation? Why don't green bean and carrot seeds germinate in the paper packaging? The one thing that sustains life is missing.

Water. It is essential. Every living thing needs water to survive. Our bodies are made of mostly water. Without it, nothing will grow. In fact, in the absence of the peculiar combination of hydrogen and oxygen, life would quickly cease to exist.

Think about those seeds again. Without a water supply, they can be planted in the richest, most fertile soil and still nothing will happen. Water activates the tiny seeds and wakes them from dormancy. Water is essential to life.

What about you and I? The Bible teaches us Jesus is the source of *living* water. God is the author and sustainer of life. Without the Living Water, we die spiritually. **Without Jesus to bring about life in our hearts, the seed of truth lies dormant – useless and ineffective.**



Will you drink from the fountain of Living Water today? Let Jesus water the dormant places in your heart and awaken your soul to life. It's time to give our spiritual seeds plenty of water and begin a season of flourishing in His love.



Read **John 4:10-13**.

Jesus is speaking with a woman who came to draw water from a well. What did Jesus offer the woman?

Jesus offers the same thing to each of us. What does the living water bring?

Are you drinking from the Living Water daily?

Write a prayer asking God to flood your heart with His Living Water today so you can grow in His love for you!

See also:

**John 7:38**

**Isaiah 44:3**

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## Day 3: Waiting

I'm waiting on the first signs of a weather change because I'm ready for a new season. I'm waiting for my teenagers to grow up and realize I may actually know what I'm talking about. And I'm waiting on God to do some big things in my life. The problem is, I don't "wait" well.

Perhaps that is why gardening can be a chore for me in the beginning. All the initial work is followed by what feels like a long period of waiting. That's my least favorite part. Every day I look at my garden to see if tiny sprouts are peeking through the dirt. When I see nothing, I become discouraged. I long to see the fruit of my labor and I struggle to remember it's a matter of time – the right time.

Waiting on God. Is it any different than waiting on those tiny seeds to germinate? Not really. We don't have the power to make it happen faster, although we all wish we could. **We're called to have an active patience as we wait.** It means while I *wait* for God to move, I am consumed with spending time with Him, pouring my heart out to Him in prayer, studying His Word, dying to myself and accepting His timeline. It has nothing to do with sitting idle and "hoping" that something will happen. It *will* happen. In *His* time.



For what are you waiting? Are you in a season of anticipation? Press into the Lord and seek Him with your whole heart. He will accomplish His will for you. Just *wait* and see!



Read **2 Corinthians 4:18**.

On what are we to be focused?

For what unseen things are you waiting?

What encouragement does that scripture give your heart?

Write a prayer asking God to strengthen your heart while you wait for His perfect timing. Ask Him to reveal how you can actively wait for Him.

See also:

**Psalms 130:5**

**Isaiah 40:31**

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## Day 4: Underground Miracle

Perhaps the most forgotten, yet fascinating, part of gardening happens underground. Because we don't see all that is occurring below the surface, we often dismiss it as miraculous. When sufficiently watered and exposed to the right temperature, a tiny root will emerge from a seed and begin to establish itself in the soil. Long before we see anything green pop out of the ground, incredible growth is taking place deeper and deeper below the surface to establish a solid root system that will support the emerging plant.

When I was a child, we sang a song in church about roots. *I've got roots....I've got roots! Planted deep in the Word of God, I've got roots...* I can't remember all the lyrics but the truth of the song is never far from my memory. Being rooted in His Word is the first priority in our spiritual growth. That is where the Holy Spirit does its work to bring about change in our lives. The roots are the foundation. **An outward expression of a vibrant walk with Christ begins in the seedbed of our heart.**



Our roots grow deep when we seek to know Jesus in a personal relationship. Too often we are concerned with *appearing* spiritual; however, before others can see Jesus in us, His Word must inhabit the deepest part of our beings. The miracle begins underground. Are your roots growing deep?



Read **Ephesians 3:16-19**.  
What is the result of being rooted and established in Christ?

Consider your personal root system. Are you firmly rooted in Christ?

What changes do you need to make to strengthen your foundation?

Write a prayer asking God to take your roots deeper in Him so that your outward expression of faith will be genuine and strong.

See also:  
**Matthew 6:33**

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## Day 5: Plant in Full Sun

My family gifted me with a beautiful hanging basket full of wonderfully, fragrant flowers. Thin green vines cascaded down the basket amid colorful blooms. It was stunning from every side. Thrilled to display the gift, I hung it from the perfect tree in the backyard so I could see it from the kitchen. It was perfect...for about three days.

I noticed the blooms were looking weak and limp. Water didn't help nor did a splash of *Miracle Grow*. Then I discovered the tag. "Hang in full sun," it read. Oh no! It was dying a slow death in the shade of the tree. I relocated it to a full sun area and now it's thriving. How I could have missed the important instruction about the sun?

In the quiet recesses of my heart I hear God's voice call to me. "You also belong in full Sun." His son, Jesus, is the light of the world. He is good, pure, holy and true. **The light exposes our sin and illuminates the truth.** He has called us out of darkness through His sacrifice and has brought us into glorious light with Him.



Check the tag of your heart, friend. It reads, "Plant in full Sun." Is there anything that needs to be brought into light so you can flourish in His love? Consider this - light was the first thing God created. Doesn't it prove worthy that the Light of the World should be the first thing we seek?



Read **1 John 1:5-7**.

Who does scripture describe as light?

Compare walking in darkness with walking in light.

Examine your heart. Are you walking in the light or are you hiding in dark places where sin can grow?

Write a prayer asking God to shine His light on you so that you can live by the truth.

See also:  
**John 8:12**

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## Day 6: Weeds vs. Wants

Gardening is a family event in my house. I see no reason why kids can't help pull a few weeds from time to time. One day as we were working together, I noticed carrot seedlings were being uprooted instead of the uninvited weeds that had suddenly appeared.

My child wasn't intentionally destroying my hard work, but the inability to see the difference in the two kinds of plants was killing good growth. I took time to explain the difference – close up, one on one, in a way that could be easily understood. Then I watched carefully to be sure my instructions had been taken to heart and carried out.

Moms, our job in raising children is much the same. It's a battle of *weeds* versus *wants*. There are some things we desperately *want* to see in our children – a love of God's truth, love for other people, obedience, etc. We see the *weeds* in their lives, even if they can't identify them yet. **Scripture instructs us to train our children in God's Word.** Doing so enables them to distinguish the *weeds* versus *wants* in their own life.



We are called to come alongside our kids to guide them as they grow. The first step in getting rid of weeds is to be able to identify them. Are you teaching your children about sin and the effects it has on our life? Be intentional about leading your children to weed out the unwanted things in their hearts.



Read **Deuteronomy 6:5-9**.  
When are we instructed to train our children in God's truth?

How often are we instructed to teach them?

Brainstorm a list of things you want your children to know about God.

Write a prayer and ask God to help you instruct your children in His ways.

See also:  
**2 Timothy 3:16, 17**



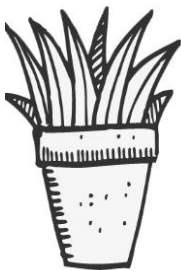
# HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

## Day 7: Pull Back a Leaf

Watering, weeding and waiting. Anticipating the first sign of harvest is tiring. I see lush, green plants with strong leaves, but what I really want to see is something to be eaten. At first glance there is nothing. Bending my knee in the dirt, getting eye level with the plants, I pull back a leaf and something catches my eye -- a tiny tomato. Eureka! It's finally happening.

Why couldn't I see the teeny-tiny tomato starting to form when I stood above the plant? Because sometimes we have to get low, humbling ourselves, before we can see any growth. Perspective is everything.

Our life is the same. As we wait for the Lord to do His work and bring about change in our hearts, we often look from a single view. **If we change our perspective, we may see something different.** Perhaps we don't notice the fruit of patience developing in our lives because we're too focused on making it through a tough season with children. Maybe joy and peace are forming while we wait for God to provide a new job. The list is endless.



The beginnings of that tomato went unnoticed simply because I was focused on something else. On what are you focusing? Do you need to change your perspective a bit and look for the things God is doing in your life? Get on your knees. Pull back a leaf. He will show you.



Read **Isaiah 55:8-9**. Compare God's thoughts with our thoughts. How do they differ?

In what area do you need to see life from God's perspective?

Read **Psalms 118:19**. What is the psalmist asking of God?

Write a prayer asking God to give you His perspective on your present circumstances.

See also:  
**Romans 8:28**

# HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

## Day 8: Avoid Drought

Soon after the spring showers, the sun takes its place in the sky and begins to bake the earth. All of creation cries out for the skies to open again and bring a cool, refreshing relief from the heat.

Without a steady soaking of the ground, roots will struggle to find water and drought ensues. The signs of water-starved plants are easily visible. Leaves wilt or become curled up on the edges. They can be dull and discolored rather than shiny and green. Without consistent watering, vegetation is at risk of dying.

I find myself thinking, “Didn’t I *just* water two days ago?” I forgot the sun came out and the wind blew and the humidity level was incredibly low – making the need crucial for more water. **When life is at stake, yesterday’s water is not enough to sustain today.** Such is life for the follower of Christ. Our pursuit of God must be ongoing. We shouldn’t expect one season of intimacy with Christ to carry us through the rest of our days. We know from the reading on Day 2 Jesus is the Living Water. We survive solely when we drink from Him every day. It’s the only way to avoid drought.



Examine your spiritual growth. Are there signs of drought or are you thriving in a healthy, well-watered relationship with Christ? We rejoice in the victories of yesterday and we continue to press on to know Him deeper *today*.



Read **Jeremiah 17:7-8**.

What are the personal benefits of cultivating a consistent relationship with Christ?

Describe your spiritual life when you are committed to a regular study of God’s Word? How does it differ when you are not spending time with Jesus?

Write a prayer to ask God to increase your desire to spend time with Him daily.

See also:

**Lamentations 3:22-23**

# HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

## Day 9: Squash the Bugs

Squash bugs can be the most destructive pests to many vegetables. These pesky bugs cause significant damage by sucking the sap from the stems. Eventually stems collapse and are no longer able to move water, causing leaves to wilt which may rapidly and frequently result in the death of the whole plant. No gardener likes to rip a dead plant from the soil before the harvest.

The best way to get rid of these varmints is to catch them early and pick them off or apply an insecticide as soon as they are spotted. Either method insists the gardener keep a keen eye open for the damage-inflicting bugs and requires quick, immediate action.

Sin works in the same way. What begins small can grow into something big that eventually destroys us. The only way to avoid it is to be on guard against whatever threatens to take us out. Anger. Bitterness. Unforgiveness. Deceit. Scripture tells us to purify ourselves from everything that contaminates the body and spirit (2 Corinthians 7:1). It's a tedious task to "pick off" our sinful nature that destroys, but the Holy Spirit empowers us to throw these things away. **The best insecticide for sin is recognizing our wrongdoing is not simply a moral failure but rather an offense to a holy God.**



What is threatening you? Do you have something that needs to be removed from your life for the sake of the abundant life in Christ? Pick off the bugs and grow strong.



Read **2 Corinthians 7:1**.  
What are we to throw off  
and for what purpose?

What are some things that  
"contaminate" us?

Why is it important to see  
our sin as an offense to a  
holy God rather than just a  
moral failure?

Write a prayer asking God  
to forgive you of any sin in  
your life.

See also:  
**1 John 1:9**

# HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

## Day 10: Sowing Seeds

Seeds grow into plants and reproduce more seeds of the same kind. My tomato seeds cannot produce potatoes and my green bean bushes will not yield a harvest of peppers. What you plant is what you get.

The thought of reproducing what we sow gives me reason for pause when I think about my children.

### What am I sowing?

There's a reason we say, "The apple doesn't fall from the tree." Most of us, over time, will have similar traits as our parents – not just physically, but emotionally as well. I see it in my own life, and I'm seeing it in the lives of my kids. I hear my sense of humor in my teenagers. I see my lack of patience in my pre-schooler. Do I see a love for Jesus in them?

We can sow the Word of God into the hearts of our children and increase the likelihood they will reap a spiritual harvest in life. However, if we want to produce angry, bitter kids the best way to do it is to be angry and bitter adults. If we want children to love the things of God, love His people and His church, the best chance for that happening is for *us* to love those things.



What are you sowing? Consider what character traits you want to see in your children. Are you reinforcing those in your relationship with them? If we reproduce what we sow, shouldn't our desire be to plant the Word of God deep in their hearts so it grows over a lifetime?



Read **Galatians 6:7-8**.

What is the warning in this scripture?

What is true about the things we "sow?"

Make a list of things you desire to sow in the lives of your children. How can you help them develop these qualities?

Write a prayer and ask God to reveal areas in your life in which you need to sow seeds that will reap eternal life.

See also:

**Proverbs 3:5-6**

# HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

## Day 11: Look But Don't Touch

I love fresh asparagus. It's expensive in the store so I added a couple of rows in my garden as an experiment. Once I had the perennials securely underground and watered, I learned I couldn't harvest them for two years! New asparagus plants need to put all their energy into establishing deep roots. Harvesting too soon will cause the plants to weaken and not have enough food stored up to survive dormancy. During the first two years, I simply watched as the thin stalks grew. I'm glad I did. The harvest year did not disappoint. The spears grew fast and strong and were certainly worth the wait.

I wonder if I would have planted asparagus, knowing beforehand I'd have to wait so long to enjoy the fruit of my labor?

Often I want God to finish His work in me fast so I can get on with ministry opportunities. I'm not always content to grow with Christ "behind the scenes," but it's critically important. **Before God can do anything through us, He must first do His work in us.** There is no other way to be prepared for the seasons of hard work and fruitful labor than to be firmly rooted and grounded in Him. Just like asparagus, in God's timing, it's worth the wait.



Are you faithfully preparing for the next season God has for you? Waiting on God's timing can be hard – but it's worse to wish you had.



Read **Philippians 1:6**.

What is the promise about the "work" God begins in a follower of Christ?

What dreams do you have for God to use your testimony to further His Kingdom?

Write a prayer to ask God to show you how He will use you to accomplish His purposes. Ask Him to help you grow strong as you wait for His perfect timing.

See also:

**Psalm 138:8**

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## Day 12: Boundaries

Many people use raised beds for growing vegetables. They keep pathway weeds from garden soil, prevent soil compaction, provide good drainage and serve as a barrier for pests such as slugs and snails. One of the features I like about a raised bed is the wall it provides to keep the prolific Bermuda grass out of my fertile soil.

Raised beds offer great boundaries for a garden. No one runs over my plants with the lawn mower or squashes the seedlings by stepping on them. The area is set apart and guarded for a specific purpose. It's clear where the yard ends and the garden begins.

Boundaries are important. They serve as a “dividing line” according to God’s Word. As followers of Christ, we must set clear limits in our life to safeguard against sin, protect us from overcommitting our time or shield us from toxic relationships. **Boundaries help us define the decisions we will make *before* we are faced with making a choice.** When we live within the confines of God’s principles, we can enjoy abundant blessings in life and be more effective for His kingdom.



Do you have clear boundaries in your life to protect you from unhealthy situations? Do you set limits according to your spiritual convictions? For the Christian, healthy boundaries allow us to guard our heart and honor God.



Read **Proverbs 4:23**.  
Why are we to guard our heart?

Think about the boundaries you have in your life. How do those help you guard your heart?

Are there any changes you need to make in setting boundaries so you can be more effective for the kingdom?

Write a prayer asking God to help you establish healthy limits on your choices.

See also:  
**Romans 12:2**

# HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

## Day 13: Stake Heavy Plants

When my garden is new, the plants are small and can stand on their own. Over time the weight of growing vegetables can become so heavy it threatens the plant. I see this in my bell peppers. Rather than letting them fall over and break, I use garden stakes to support them and brace the stalks for continued growth. The reinforced plants thrive, producing more peppers teathered to the guide, without the threat of crushing under pressure. Left alone, the harvest wouldn't be as plentiful.

There are times in life when we all need support. The weight of the world can be heavy and threaten to crush our faith and stamp out our joy in the Lord. Raising children gets tough, finances are tight or relationships become strained. **We were never created to carry life's burdens alone.** It's not a weakness to need help. In fact, Jesus never intended for us to do life alone. We were designed to be in community with other believers and to rely on God. The Holy Spirit lives in us to help navigate the tough times in life when we feel stress. He is at work in our hearts to strengthen and empower us to live victorious lives, despite the pressing circumstances we face.



Are you trying to handle everything on your own? Stake yourself to something stronger – the Holy Spirit. In our weakness, He is strong. A thriving community of believers supports each other through God's power working among them.



Read **2 Corinthians 12:9-10**.  
What is made perfect in our weakness?

How is Christ's power demonstrated in our weaknesses?

What are areas in your life you need support? How can you "stake yourself" to Christ?

Write a prayer asking God to show you where you need a stake. Ask Him to be your reinforcement and your strength in tough times.

See also:  
**Romans 8:26**

# HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

## Day 14: The Reward Is Worth It

It generally happens that halfway through the growing season I question why I even started this gardening adventure. It's hot outside. The need to pull weeds is never ending and inevitably my city imposes water rationing so I am forced to hand water with the hose when I'd rather let the sprinkler do the work. Simply put, I get tired of the effort it takes to eat fresh vegetables.

If you've eaten green beans from the garden or tasted a fresh-from-the-vine tomato, you know there's nothing like it. It's hard to describe the *taste* of excellence, but it's absence is easy to detect.

Once I harvest a few things and serve it to my family, I'm quickly reminded why I started the gardening journey in the first place. There is no substitute for homegrown goodness. **The reward for hard work and perseverance far outweighs the sacrifice of time and energy.**

Perseverance in our pursuit of holiness is the same way. If we stay the course, following Christ with our whole heart and soul, we will enjoy blessings greater than we could ask or imagine.



Are you “pressing-on” in your spiritual walk and fueling your passion to know Christ more? Don't give up. You're investing in an eternal future that will not spoil or fade.



Read **Galatians 6:9**.

What is the promise if we do not give up?

In what area of your life do you become weary?

How can you refocus to keep your perspective on the desired outcome?

What encouragement have you received to never give up in serving God?

Write a prayer asking God to give you strength to persevere. Ask Him to make His promises real in your heart to keep you going.

See also:

**Ephesians 3:20**



## HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

### Day 15: Roses Love Garlic

I'd never snip off a few rose petals and sauté them with my favorite vegetables, and I'd never plant a bed of garlic purely for aesthetic value. Yet when those two things are planted side by side, there are mighty benefits. Roses love garlic. It's an unusual companionship for sure.

Rose bushes commonly fall victim to aphids – those miniscule, sap-sucking bugs that invade new plant growth. They multiply quickly and can be a big nuisance. One of the best ways to protect the rose bush is to plant cloves of garlic in close proximity. The tiny aphids and several other pests are repelled by the smell of garlic so they ignore the rose bush in search of a more inviting victim. (Can you imagine being *repelled* by the smell of garlic? *Neither can I.*)

I've got many garlic-type friends in my life. They are my accountability partners, my mentors and trusted confidants concerned with my spiritual well-being. They help me fight off temptation, offer godly counsel and encourage me in the truth. Essentially, they keep the "aphids" of this world *off* of me. **Jesus calls us to be in community with one another to encourage and strengthen fellow believers.**



Do you have people in your life that support you in your Christian walk? Can you count on them to point you to the truth of Scripture and encourage you to seek the heart of God? Every rose bush needs a little garlic.



Read **1 Thessalonians 5:11**.  
What two things are we told to do?

When have you received encouragement to help you through a difficult time?

In what ways can you build others up that it may glorify God?

Write a prayer thanking God for the special people in your life that point you to His truth. Ask Him to make you a blessing to others as well.

See also:  
**Proverbs 27:17**

# HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

## Day 16: Pruning for Growth

My tomato plants were abounding with nice green leaves. It was the fullest I had ever seen the plants. I was excited to see them spilling out of the cages with new growth, but my enthusiasm faded when I realized I was growing a lot of healthy foliage but not many tomatoes. Thankfully, *Google* set me straight.

Too many leaf-filled branches were actually doing more damage than good. The small stems growing between the main branches were diverting energy away from potential tomatoes. The solution? Prune the “suckers” to stimulate tomato production.

Pruning is hard. I never like cutting off part of a plant even though I know it will produce a better crop. It seems so counterproductive and wasteful, doesn't it? Seasoned gardeners understand this principle and accept the need to cut off something they love for something they love more – healthy growth.

I prune growing plants so it will produce more. Jesus taught this principle in John 15:2. The unproductive branches are cut off, yet those growing are pruned for even more growth. **We all benefit from periodic pruning.** Consider your life. Think how much more effective we could be for the Kingdom if we weren't overcommitted and stressed because our energy is diverted to *good* activities instead of *great* ones?



Sometimes we have to let go of *good* in order to achieve *great*. God has an abundant life waiting for us if we are willing to be pruned.



Read **John 15:2-4**.  
What differentiates branches that are cut off with branches that are pruned?

Where must we remain to produce spiritual fruit?

What in your life is productive but may need to be cut back or eliminated for the sake of growing stronger?

Write a prayer asking God to show you areas in your life where you need to be pruned.

See also:  
**Hebrews 12:10**

## HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

### Day 17: Bloom Where You're Transplanted

Sometimes the growing season begins in one place and ends in another. Often seeds are planted in a greenhouse or in tiny seed containers several weeks before the last frost to get a jump start on growing. This allows the seeds to germinate in the right conditions when the outdoor weather may not be cooperating. It is never intended to have the seeds grow to maturity squeezed into one little area with shallow soil. In time, seedlings are transplanted to their place in the garden where they can flourish.

Transplanting the seedlings to the ground is careful work. The gardener gently moves the plant to its assignment without damaging the gentle roots. In the garden it's watered and carefully reinforced by the soil around it. What a joy to see it take permanent root and begin to produce!

God transplants us from time to time, doesn't He? **Moving from the known to the unknown can make us fearful, but when God orchestrates the change, it is always for our good and for His purpose.** Perhaps it's a physical relocation, a change in jobs or maybe a simple call to go in a different direction in serving Him.



Are you being transplanted? Is God moving you into another area of life for His glory? You can trust Him to hold your roots firm as He establishes you in the exact place He has prepared. Healthy growth is His specialty. Bloom where you're transplanted.



Read **Isaiah 43:18-19**.  
What is God promising to do?

What is changing in your life? Do you sense God doing a new thing in you?

How can you embrace a season of change and find joy in your circumstances?

Write a prayer asking God to give you spiritual vision for the changes you face.

See also:  
**Isaiah 30:21**

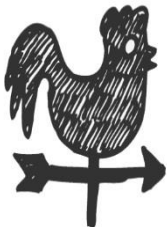
## HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

### Day 18: Ask A Master Gardener

My friend has a natural green thumb. She has planted many more gardens than I have, grown thousands more green beans than me and harvested more sugar snap peas than I care to count. I call her when I have a question or concern and sometimes I send quick pictures of my victories! Her years spent sowing, watering, and weeding give her beautiful insight that encourages novice gardeners like myself.

I'm certain I would have given up the quest to grow my own food long ago if it weren't for people like her, informative YouTube videos and amazingly illustrated gardening books at the library. I can't afford the time and money it would take to start from scratch and figure it all out on my own with no advice or wisdom from experts. Learning from other people has stopped me several times from ripping up everything in my garden and letting the Bermuda grass take over.

We all need people in our life who can offer godly counsel and wisdom – mentors who have traveled the roads we are walking and can see clearly on the other side. **We need relationships with women who have more experience to offer suggestions and insight to the challenges we face.** The benefits are amazing.



Do you have a mentor? Do you seek the counsel of older godly women who can give you fresh perspective and guide you in understanding? Look for someone who has a heart for God, life experiences and a love for people. We all benefit from a friend who has “been there, done that.”



Read **Titus 2:3-5**

How does the apostle Paul describe mentoring relationships?

What do you see as the benefits of having or being a mentor?

In what area of life could you most benefit from having a mentor?

Write a prayer and ask God to direct you to a mentoring relationship.

See also:

**Proverbs 15:22**

# HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

## Day 19: Harvest

My favorite reward in gardening is *finally* getting to enjoy the result of all my hard work. Throughout spring and well into summer I wait for the vegetables to mature, fighting off bugs and continuously watering. When it's time to pick the first vegetables, I feel reflective and nearly overwhelmed at the thought of how far this tiny crop has come – from seed to my table. Was the wait worth it? The first bite of peppers or a slice of cucumber gives the answer – YES!

I almost forget all the frustration and hard labor I endured to put this food before my family. The Father sweetly reminds me my adventures in parenting will be much the same way. There will come a day when I forget all the tears I've cried for my children. I won't remember the heartache of watching them learn hard lessons or make their own decisions. I will keep with me all the memories of good times, stored up in my heart and serve those to them when they are older.

Gardening is much like parenting. **We don't reap in the same season we sow.** There is a lot that happens between the beginning and the end of our journey. Sometimes it is exhausting. Other times it seems like a futile effort. But when we enter a new season of life and begin to enjoy our harvest, we see it is worth every minute of the pilgrimage.



Parenting is a journey – a long journey. Are you still working your garden or enjoying a harvest with your grown children? Whatever your position, we can have confidence God is with us every step of the way – leading us toward a plentiful harvest.



Read **Proverbs 22:6**.  
What is the instruction given to parents? What is the result?

Consider where you are as a parent. Are you busy watering, weeding or harvesting as a mom?

What encouragement does it give you to remember we don't reap in the same season we sow?

Write a prayer and ask God to give you strength as a mom to make it to the harvest!

See also:  
**Psalm 127:3**

# HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

## Day 20: Seasons Change

The end of the growing season frequently leaves me feeling a little bit sad. Even though I am somewhat grateful for a break in watering, weeding and chasing bugs, I hate to see the experience come to a close. Pulling out the remaining wilted plant stalks, I think about the delicious green beans we enjoyed, the countless tomatoes I shared with my neighbor and the basil that is drying for winter use. As satisfying as the garden was, the season eventually ends. Days will grow shorter, and I'll move from gardening to some other hobby more suitable for the cooler temperatures. It won't be better or worse; it will simply be *different*.

Our life is a series of seasons. We parent for a number of years and then our children start their own lives. We move into a new job, trading familiarity for a new adventure. Relationships shift and our dreams continue to evolve. **Change is the norm, whether we embrace it or not.**

You may be faced with new situations and circumstances over time, but be assured our God does not change. His love and faithfulness to us is never seasonal. We can have confidence that no matter how our life twists and turns, He is there in the midst.



In your life you may be experiencing a new season. Do you sense a new direction taking shape? Remember God is in control of all things – especially when change occurs.



Read **Ecclesiastes 3:1-8**.

What is the main idea of this passage?

What changes are happening in your life?

How has God's presence been evident in different seasons of your life?

Write a prayer asking God to show you His purpose for you in the next season of your life.

See also:  
**James 1:17**

# HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

## Day 21: Share Your Crops

There is great joy in harvesting home-grown fruits and vegetables. I love filling up my basket with peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes and more. I don't even mind when my fingernails get dirty from pulling carrots or digging up potatoes. I wear that dirt like a badge of honor – a testament to all my hard work.

There are generally a few weeks in the growing season where everything is ready to be picked at once. I end up with more than enough to go around my household. What do I do with the overflow? I share. I get hugs and thank you notes from grateful neighbors. From time to time, some of them even start gardens of their own – inspired by my personal love of the great outdoors.

Sharing the plunder from my garden is fun and exciting but not nearly as important as sharing my faith in Christ. My fresh produce may feed them, but the love of God will save them. **When we share the Good News of the gospel with others we plant spiritual seeds of truth.** In this way, the Kingdom of God continues to grow. How exciting to be an active part of His plan!



Consider what you are sharing with others. Are you offering them a glimpse into the work of God in your life? Are people inspired by your love for Him and His truth? Do you joyfully speak about what God means to you? Share your crops with others. You never know what God will do with a willing gardener.



Read **Psalm 63:3**.

How does the psalmist describe God's love?

Briefly tell what God has done for you.

What keeps you from sharing what God has done in your life?

Write a prayer and ask God for boldness to share the gospel of Christ with someone this week.

See also

**Matthew 28:19**