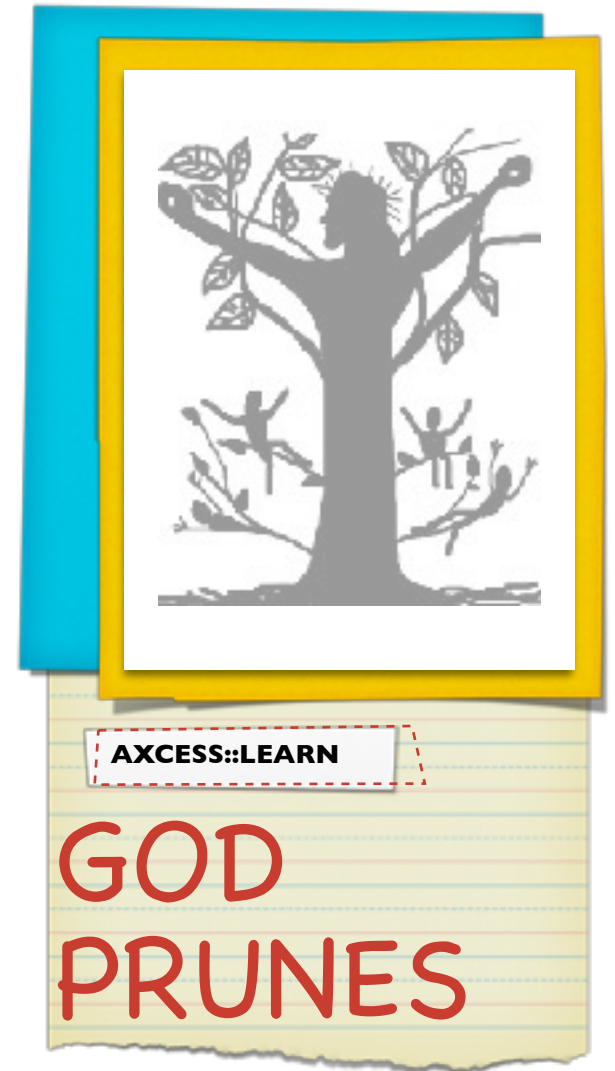




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CUTTING AND PRUNING

Leviticus 25:3-4 / John 15:1-2 / Ephesians 2:10 /

Matthew 5:16

>< What is your understanding of what “pruning” is?

There is a difference between “trimming” and “pruning.”

Take a moment to understand how a vine functions::

—Do grapes grow on the vine trunk or the branches?

—What purpose do the branches serve?

>< Leviticus - The command that the Lord gave Moses at Mount Sinai was very specific concerning sowing fields and pruning vineyards and observing a Sabbath Year. What does this command reveal about God’s faithfulness and about trusting Him?

>< John - “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.”

>< Ephesians / Matthew - “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” / “...Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Bearing fruit is not optional in a believer’s life. It is a result of obedience of the Word of God and His Spirit’s promptings.

COUNTING JOY IN SUFFERING

Hebrews 12:6 / Proverbs 3:11-12 / James 1:2-4 /

John 15:1-3

>< Hebrews & Proverbs - “The Lord disciplines those he loves, and punishes everyone he accepts as his child.”

Discipline: —verb. *training someone to obey rules or a code of behaviour, using punishment to correct disobedience.*

>< James - What benefit is there to accepting God’s discipline? Can you rejoice (or “be full of joy”) as you suffer through trials and testing of your faith?

What lesson can we learn about perseverance from the pruning process?

We can fight for joy in our trials because God is working on our hearts, pruning us more into the image of Christ.

>< John - “...You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.”

When God prunes us, he is exposing our sin. God does not work apart from His Word. Ephesians 5:26 says how we are cleansed “by the washing of water by the word.”

RESURRECTION BY ABIDING IN HIM

John 15:1-4 / Philippians 3:8-11

>< Consider the suffering Jesus endured on the cross... and the joy in His resurrection! The Word became flesh and was pruned so that we could be cleansed and made holy to be used to glorify Father God.

>< John - “...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.”

>< Philippians (NCV)- “...I think that all things are worth nothing compared with the greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of him, I have lost all those things, and now I know they are worthless trash.

This allows me to have Christ and belong to him.

Now I am right with God, not because I followed the law, but because I believed in Christ. God uses my faith to make me right with him. I want to know Christ and the power that raised him from the dead. I want to share in his sufferings and become like him in his death. Then I have hope that I myself will be raised from the dead..”

>< Cooperate with God as He is faithful to continue the good work He has started in you. Allow Him to prune you and cut out all the non-essentials in glorifying Him.

“This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”

—John 15:8

NOTES

The joy and satisfaction that go hand in hand with the bearing of more perfect and abundant fruit are not only reserved for the vinedresser, but are shared by the branch as well. The branch shares in the joy of the vinedresser, because it is the desire of the branch to bear more perfect and abundant fruit, that the vinedresser might be glorified. That is why the branch can bear the pain of pruning, just as Jesus could bear the pain of the cross: “...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross...” Hebrews 12:2.

—Vern Nicolette