

MY BELOVED, COME INTO YOUR GARDEN

SERIES: DEVELOPING AN INNER LIFE IN GOD

I. DEVELOPING AN INNER LIFE IN GOD (EPH. 3:16-21)

Ephesians 3:16-21 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,¹⁷ that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height --¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,²¹ to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

- A. God desires for us to develop a vibrant inner life in Him. It is possible to seem alive on the outside and yet lack an inner, secret life in God. We want to be fully alive on the inside.
- B. God has called His church to experience the fullness of God.
- C. The fullness of God? God will accomplish it. This gives me hope.
- D. In order for me to experience the fullness of God, I need to be strengthened in the inner man, in my inmost-self. It really takes God to know God. He strengthens us on the inside, so that He can fill us with the fullness of Himself (Prov. 4:23)
- E. God desires to encounter you at the core of who you are. When your heart is filled with God, your mouth speaks, and life flows (cf. Mark 7:20-23).

John 10:10 I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

II. MY BELOVED, COME INTO YOUR GARDEN

- A. Our heart is like a garden (Song 4:16). In order for us to be fruitful, God tends the garden of our heart. God wants to give us a life that is fulfilling and productive in Him.
- B. Fruit are things that God enjoys. Humility, meekness, love, joy. It brings Him pleasure, enjoyment.

Gal 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

- C. These are also attributes of God that we bear unto God's glory. When we are connected to God, He changes our emotional chemistry. We will become more and more emotionally healthy when we are connected to God.

III. IF WE ARE FRUITFUL, GOD PRUNES US SO THAT WE WILL BE MORE FRUITFUL

NKJ John 15:1-2 I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

- A. For every area of life, we can either be fruitful to the glory of God, or we can have no fruit. The goal is fruitfulness. God prunes those that are fruitful so that they will be more fruitful.
- B. The “good” can be enemy of the “best.” Needed resources and energy are directed elsewhere. Pruning involves removing these seemingly good things.
- C. Be okay in weakness. Wherever there is fruitfulness, there will be pruning.
2 Cor. 12: 9-10 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
- D. It is essential that you understand this principal or you will be miserable in your relationship with God.
- E. In your weakness, His strength is made perfect. He will strengthen you in the inner man.

IV. UNDERSTAND THAT GOD ENJOYS YOU, EVEN IN YOUR WEAKNESS

- A. Rebellion and immaturity may outwardly look the same but the heart is very different. God sees the heart. It is a destructive deception to write ourselves off as rebellious if in fact we are instead spiritually immature.
- B. Biblical examples of immaturity that were not rebellion - King David’s many failures; Peter denying the Lord (Matt. 26); Peter and Barnabas sinning against the Gentiles (Gal. 2: 11-14); and, the failure of John Mark (Acts 15:36-40).
- C. **Error #1 Sin is not important** – compromise of the liberal. **Error #2 Sin is the most important** reality about you – legalism. In other words, sin is **too important** in that your sin defines you more than God's grace because it is more powerful before God. **Response #3 Sin is serious but second in power and importance** to God's grace. Your spiritual identity is a lover of God in God's grace.

V. REJOICE AND BE THANKFUL EVEN WHEN YOU ARE BEING PRUNED

- A. Learn to be content in every situation. You have to learn to both be abased and to abound.
Phil 4:12-13 I know how to be abased (to be in need), and I know how to abound (to have plenty). Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
- B. God’s goal is your ultimate fruitfulness. It may mean that in this season of your life, you will have nothing to show for it.
- C. In order for the spices to overflow, I must surrender to both the north winds (the cold bitter winds of winter) of adversity and the south winds (warm refreshing breeze of summer) of blessing and refreshing. It’s all working for you (Rom. 8:28)!
Song 4:16 Awake, O north wind, And come, O south! Blow upon my garden, That its spices may flow out. Let my beloved come to his garden And eat its pleasant fruits.