



# THE PRUNING



A S H A K E T H E N A T I O N S D E V O T I O N A L

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 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. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.”

John 15:1-4

It's healthy. Landscapers prune plants as part of their profession for a variety of reasons. Pruning removes dead parts of the plant, it shapes and redirects growth, it improves health, removes dangerous branches that may cause harm to surrounding structures, and allows more sunlight to get to the vegetation underneath to name a few.

Jesus was so practical. His teachings almost always related to that which was common or applicable to the lives of those He was speaking. For us, like the plants, pruning can:

**1. Promote Better Health:** Like plants, when we remove dead things from our lives, it allows us to increase our health. Be it relationships, mindsets, behaviors, or unhealthy emotions – when we remove these from our lives, it allows a lightness and a fresh joy.

**2. Improve Appearance:** A person always looks better when they smile. Like plants, when pruning occurs in us, our countenance changes. This fresh joy is visible on the outside! It draws people to you so that they can experience your beauty.

**3. Produce More Fruit:** A branch that bears fruit, when pruned, increases production. It is like that with us too! When we manifest the Kingdom of God, those attributes are fine-tuned so that they can grow more. The fruit in us is not only works, but it is also the fruit of the Spirit. As you press into love, you find yourself in situations where your love is tested. If you are a 'hot tempered' person, as the Lord desires to grow you, you will find yourself in situations where you must practice self-control.

**4. Provide More Sunlight:** Pruning isn't only the removal of that which is dead. There can be good things in our lives that are no longer of benefit. With plants, sometimes the good growth can block the sun from reaching the surrounding foliage. This keeps those plants from reaching their maximum potential. What is in your life that does not allow those around you to receive the Light of Christ?

Don't read over 'You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.' Pruning is not a matter of preparation for qualification. We are already clean! Even the most holy and pure among us needs pruning. There is always something that the Lord can remove in us in order to gain more understanding of what it is He has called us to become. Pruning, although painful at times, is what happens when the Vinedresser cares. If He didn't love us, He wouldn't prune us. The more you are pruned, the more you come to appreciate the process. It doesn't always make it easier, but when you see the results on the other side of the season, you welcome it!