

CULTIVATION



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Lesson Three

After a seed is planted, we must cultivate it, and care for it, or it will die. If we don't, we will have wasted our time in trying to grow that seed within us. Cultivate, according to Webster, means (1) to prepare and use (soil, land, etc.) For growing crops, to till; (2) to break up the surface soil around plants in order to destroy weeds, prevent crusting and preserve moisture; (3) to grow (plants or crops) from seeds, bulbs, shoots, etc.; (4) to improve or develop (plants) by various horticultural techniques; (5) to improve by care, training or study, refine, as, cultivate your mind; (6) to promote the development or growth of, acquire and develop, as he cultivated a social conscience (we're talking about Christ consciousness); (7) to seek to develop a familiarity with; give one's attention to, pursue.

The word of God says to break up the fallow ground and to not sow among thorns. *Jeremiah 4:3, "For thus saith the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns."* The prophet Hosea said, "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon YOU" *Hosea 10:12.*

How much clearer can the Word be? Many times we read over these verses and we do not really consider the application thereof.

Cultivation is basically a two-fold process, the first being the preparation of the soil, and the second is caring for the seed sown. In preparing the soil, which is our heart, there are several attitudes we must mix within us to fertilize and break up the fallow ground. They are humility, sincerity, honesty, Godly sorrow and patience. *1 Peter 5:5, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble," 1 Corinthians 5:8, "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." James 1:4, "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Psalms 26:6, "I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord." and 2 Corinthians 7:10, "For Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."*

This two-fold process can be done by completely opening yourselves up to God's Spirit through surrender and fellowship with Him. Be willing to observe the areas of your life that need changing, knowing they can be changed, and don't be intimidated about facing different areas of your life because you feel that if you try to overcome them that you will fail. That's why we bury some areas of our lives, subconsciously, and we get into the realm called "denial."

We deny things in ourselves because we're afraid to deal with them because we're afraid that we'll fail and not be able to overcome these things. So many times we would rather not even admit that they are there. However, if we'll acknowledge the negative and recognize it, then say **"O.K., I see that's there, but I'm dead to that now, I'm a new person in Christ. Then we will overcome. Say, "I will acknowledge these new things about me now,"** then you will have power over whatever it is you are trying to have power over. It doesn't matter what it is. It's your inheritance, in Christ.

Many times people are afraid to do this because of the defense mechanism they have built around them to hide away part of themselves or their lives that they are disappointed with. This is why it is imperative to understand the verse that says he that loses his life will find it and he that finds it will lose it.

Matthew 10:39, "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it," and John 12:25, "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

In other words, once you surrender, once you say, **“O.K., I admit it. I need change,”** then you’ll be free. As for the second part of the text, “he that finds it will lose it,” means that if you try to find it and hold on to your ego, you are going to lose, you’re going to go down.

What this simply means is if we continue to hold on, through our pride, to our old ways instead of coming to a place of repentance (knowing that God will not condemn us, but give us the power to change), we will never change the things that we desire to change. We can give ourselves a momentary fix to cover up those things we desire to change, but unless we uproot them through humility and mind renewal we will inevitably be given over to their power.

Allow God to show you in His gentle way, the areas that need changing. Don't be afraid for He will not ever expose your frailties in a condemning manner, but gently - one at a time.

Satan on the other hand, will condemn, bombard and intrude upon you with the problem that you have. He will do that to get you to close up. He’ll punch on you in that frail area and you will close that area up so that no one can get in and change that area. Whereas, God will gently help you open that frail area up and deal with that particular problem. The enemy’s goal is to condemn you, to make you feel guilty, to continually make you dwell on your weakness and the fact that you can’t overcome it, and that you are prone to defeat. His goal is to make you defend yourself, and if you are defending yourself, you are not surrendering. You must let go and surrender. Don’t defend yourself, surrender to God and you will rise to walk in the newness of life. ***Revelation 12:10, "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."***

PROVIDING A GOOD ENVIRONMENT

We do this by gaining an understanding of the will of God. It is an innate desire of man to be happy, be in health and prosper, a desire that has been placed there by God in creation. He wanted Adam to have dominion over the earth and subdue it. ***Genesis 1:28, "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."***

He did not say that the earth was to have dominion over man and that the earth was to subdue him. It is interesting to watch those who would think that it is God's will to be sick or be in poverty, and experience negative living, striving so hard to fight God's supposed will by trying to get better jobs, going to hospitals to cure their illnesses and saving up for the so-called **“rainy day.”** If the rainy day is from God, then why try to prevent it? Let it come and pray for more so that you might receive more of God's will for your life!

That does sound ludicrous doesn’t it? It sounds really foolish. It is just common sense to know that evil is not God’s will for His children.

In our hearts we know that it is not God's will for us to live that kind of life! Yet somehow people have bought the concept of suffering, poverty, depression, confusion, etc. As being part of the plan of God. They say things like, “Why did God do this to me.” It is no wonder why the scripture says, ***“My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge,” Hosea 4:6.*** It is this very lack that has caused so many to accept the seed of the serpent, and through fear and guilt, a negative concept of life. This is why people run from churches and people won't preach the Bible, because they have the wrong perspective. It is through wrong teaching they have somehow gotten the idea that God holds us back, that God doesn't want us to succeed, that God doesn't want us to be happy, that He wants us to suffer, be depressed and be sad. Nothing could be further from the truth!

THE OUR FATHER

Through understanding God's mind and will for us we can prepare a better environment for the Word to cultivate. In examining the model prayer Jesus gave us in *Matthew 6:9-13*, we can glean some insights to the will of God. Keep in mind that Jesus is God's Son. Who would know more about God's will, or the will of His father, than Him.

Observe His model prayer. ***“Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.”***

In this example of prayer by Jesus Christ, God incarnate, who came to earth to show us God's perfect will for our lives, I would like to point out three observations.

First: ***“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”*** It will only take a moment of thought for you to realize that in heaven there is no sickness, pain, poverty, death, depression, etc. It is obvious that Jesus is asking the Father to bring that same element to earthly living.

How is God's will done in heaven? Think about it. The only reason why there is negative life on earth is because of the fall of Lucifer and his rebellion and the subsequent rebellion of man. Through Christ, the curse has been reversed, if you can receive it you will have it. 1 *Corinthians 15:45*, ***“And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.”*** and *Mark 11:24*, ***“Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”***

Second: Under New Testament thought or under the new covenant, Jesus prayed, ***“lead us not into temptation.”*** Remember now, Jesus Christ is giving us the perfect example of prayer for the perfect will of God in our lives. Temptation here comes from the Greek word **Pelagos** meaning deep or open sea. Allegorically it implies things that are of a destructive, evil nature, the negative forces in this world. The idea here is that one would be lead, as it were, through or around enemy lines without being detected into abundant life (*John 10:10*, ***“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly”***).

In other words, if we're not to be led into temptation then where are we to be led? It's so obvious. This is the mind of God!

The Third observation I would like to make is the quote, ***“deliver us from evil.”*** If we do fall, as a result of our error due to a lack of knowledge or wisdom (*James 1:2-8*, ***“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that they trying of your faith worketh patience, But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all mean liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his way.”***) into a place of tribulation or evil, the perfect prayer is for deliverance from evil, not, “Oh God help me to endure what you have put upon me.”

There are times mistakes are made but God says He will work it for our good. *Romans 8:28*, ***“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”*** Even so, in those times, we are given supernatural love, peace and joy and even in that kind of situation, life can be abundant.

Any suffering outside of the aforementioned is not to be accepted into our mind or otherwise, and deliverance from it is the perfect and proper prayer!

So we can see through the perfect prayer of the **“Our Father”** that it is not God's will for us to suffer sickness, confusion, pain, fear, and other obvious negative elements, but rather that God would lead us away from, through, and around these things through wisdom and divine insight.

In *James 1:2* we see that an individual falls into temptation, they are not led there. They fall there.

James goes on to say that even then it will work for the good (*verse 3 and 4*). James implies in *verse 5* that it's a result of the lack of ones wisdom and that we are to ask God for more wisdom so as to avoid the pitfalls of the enemy.

In *verse 12*, he says that God will give us a special blessing for enduring that temptation that we fell into, but in *verse 13*, he clearly states that it is not from God, but a result of our own lusts or the seed of the serpent conceived in us (*verse 14 and 15*).

Verse 16 tells us not to err by attributing evil to God. Don't make the mistake of thinking that evil is coming from God. *Verse 17* shows us plainly where good things come from above. ***“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the father of lights, with whom there is no variableness neither shadow of turning.”*** In other words, God does not change. He is good all the time. He does not change. There is not even a shadow of variation in His plan for us, His people. If you are in a wheelchair, God didn't put you there, but He will work it for your good.

If you want to be healed and get out of that wheelchair one day, can you see how it would hinder your faith to think God put you there? You would feel subconsciously like you were fighting God. This is applicable to any kind of negative state we find ourselves in, whether it be poverty, sickness, depression, etc. Jesus said it is His good pleasure to give to us the kingdom. He is good all the time (*John 10:10-11*), and He does not put evil on His children.

So we see that it is very obvious that if sow these wrong kinds of thoughts into our mind that our only friend is at times really our enemy, then how are we going to come to Him and ask for deliverance when we are thinking these things about God. It is very important to have the proper view of God in order to assimilate seed in a positive fashion that brings forth advantageous and profitable results into our lives.

James, the half-brother of Christ who lived with Christ and observed Him for many years, does tell us where evil comes from in *James 3:14*. ***“But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. this wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.”*** So we see that these things come from Satan himself and not from God!

Jesus contrasted this in *John 10:10-11* when He said He is the good shepherd and that the thief came to destroy and to kill. I believe Christ was trying to emphasize to those who believed God brought destruction upon His people that they were misunderstanding their Father.

However, rebellion is as a sin of witchcraft (*1 Samuel 15:23*, ***“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry...”***) and if we rebel against God's plan for our lives, God will chasten us by releasing us to our rebellion (*Romans 1:24*, ***“Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts....”***).

SCRIPTURES FOR REINFORCEMENT

John 10:10 - "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and they might have it more abundantly."

3 John 2 - "Beloved, I wish above all things that though mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

2 Corinthians 8:9 - "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in that, though He was made rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."

2 Timothy 1:7 - "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power and of love, and of a sound mind."

Galatians 3:14 - "That the blessing of Abraham might come upon the gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith."

Matthew 7:11 - "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"

Philippians 4:19 - "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

1 Peter 2:24 - "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

Matthew 8:17 - "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the Prophet, saying, himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

Psalms 103:3 - "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases."

Additional references:

Deuteronomy 28:1-14

Matthew 11:28-29

Malachi 3:10

Psalms 112:1-3

1 Thessalonians 5:21

Joshua 1:7-9

John 6:35

Acts 10:38

Meditating on who God really is and what He is really like will help cultivate an environment for the seed to germinate in.