

# Pruning the Branches

## Week 3 - Spiritual Health

### John 15:1–8

Jesus describes Himself as the true Vine and the Father as the Gardener. Just as healthy plants must be pruned to become stronger and more fruitful, our heavenly Father lovingly removes whatever hinders our spiritual growth. Pruning is not God's punishment or rejection—it is His invitation into greater health, greater intimacy with Christ, and greater fruitfulness. While we have already been justified through Jesus, God continues His work of sanctifying us, shaping us to become more like Christ.



Our natural response to weakness is often to hide, strive harder, or distance ourselves from God because of guilt or shame. Jesus invites us to do the opposite. When we recognize areas of weakness or unhealthy fruit in our lives, our response must be to seek a deeper connection with Him. Apart from Jesus we wither, but as we remain connected to Him, He does in us what we could never accomplish on our own.

The Father's pruning work requires humility, teachability, and trust. He uses His Word, the Holy Spirit, life circumstances, and the loving encouragement and correction of other believers to shape our lives. As He reveals unhealthy patterns, ungodly beliefs, or sinful habits, we are invited to release them through repentance and replace every lie with God's truth. The goal is not simply changing behavior but cultivating the personal qualities (Humility, teachability & trust) that yield to God, allowing Him to transform our hearts into Christ likeness and produce good fruit.

God delights in His children and desires our freedom. As we remain in Christ, welcome His loving pruning, and surrender every area of our lives to Him, we become healthier disciples who bear lasting fruit that brings God glory.

# **Personal Reflection**

## **Remaining Connected**

1. When I recognize my own weakness or failure, do I tend to run toward Jesus or away from Him?
2. Are guilt, shame, or feelings of unworthiness keeping me from intimacy with God?
3. What practices help me remain closely connected to Jesus each day?

## **Welcoming God's Pruning**

4. Is there an area of my life where God may be inviting me to grow?
5. How do I usually respond when God tests or corrects me?
6. Do I tend to trust that God's pruning is motivated by His love rather than disappointment?

## **Yielding to Transformation**

7. Am I living with a humble and teachable heart?
8. Who has God placed in my life that lovingly speaks truth and correction?
9. Is there constructive critique I've rejected that I should prayerfully reconsider before the Lord?

## **Releasing What Must Be Removed**

10. Is there a recurring unhealthy pattern or "bad fruit" that God is asking me to address?
11. What belief or lie may be feeding that pattern?
12. What truth from God's Word does He want me to believe instead?

## **Moving Forward**

13. What fruit is God already producing in my life that He wants to nourish to flourish?
14. What branch am I still defending that He may be asking me to surrender?
15. What one step of obedience can I take this week to cooperate with God's pruning?

# Small Group Discussion

## Opening Question

Describe a time when something difficult in your life ultimately produced growth or maturity. Looking back, what did God accomplish through that season?

## Read Together John 15:1–8

## Discussion

**1. What stood out most to you from this week's message? Why?**

**2. Jesus says the Father prunes fruitful branches.**

- Why do you think God prunes people who are already bearing fruit?
- How does this change your perspective on difficult seasons?

**3. Discuss this statement:**

*"When you recognize weakness in your life, do not run from Jesus. Remain with Jesus, and let Him lovingly remove what hinders your growth"*

- Why do believers sometimes pull away from God when they fail?
- What helps you stay connected during those moments?

**4. God prunes through His Word, the Holy Spirit, life circumstances, and trusted people.**

- Which of these has God most often used in your life?
- Which one do you find hardest to receive?

**5. The sermon suggested that unhealthy behaviors are often rooted in ungodly beliefs.**

- Why is it important to address beliefs instead of only changing behavior?
- Can you think of a biblical truth that has changed the way you live?

**6. Humility, teachability, and trust are essential for spiritual growth.**

- Which of these comes most naturally to you?
- Which one needs the greatest growth right now?

## 7. Closing Prayer

Take a few moments to pray for one another. Invite the Holy Spirit to reveal any He wants to prune for growth or cut away and pray that each person would remain deeply connected to Christ and bear lasting fruit that glorifies God.