

Good Roots

Wendy VanWingerden, Guest Writer

Today's Treasure

He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

Psalm 1:3

"If you don't have good roots, you won't have good fruit." I heard my father in law say to my husband as he sat eating breakfast in my kitchen one morning. They were discussing the process of growing quality plants in the greenhouse (our family business). Talk of growing quality plants is a common conversation in our home just as any farmer talks of animal care or crop harvest. I often allow it to slip into the daily routine, but this phrase could not go unnoticed.

"Good roots" Although they were speaking of plants, I thought of people and in particular myself. Do my roots grow deep? Are they a thick mass intertwined and constantly reaching deeper for nourishment? Do I seek out streams of living water? Do my roots gather daily nutrition? What do I feed them? I want to be well nourished. My roots, like a plant, carry life to my being. I need good roots so that I can produce good fruit!

Have you ever brought home a flat of beautiful plants that perfectly fit your vision for a colorful summer flower bed? Instead of filling out, their growth is stunted, sometimes withering and dying. The roots were only deep enough to grow in the tiny space of their little seedling boxes. I might put the plant in the soil, but it dies because the roots are packed so tightly in a small space, they aren't strong enough to spread out into nutritious soil. Surrounding those weak, tiny roots is soil, rich with everything they need to grow. But the roots stay so tightly wrapped around each other they cannot absorb what is right in front of them.

Some of us are like this, I think. We may grow beautiful and have great success. We may look like they have "it" all together. But then the storms of life hit. The wind blows hard, the rain pounds from all sides, or the sun shines hot for days and weeks and the ground hardens to the point of cracking. What then? This perfect plant, this "perfect" person lays flat, it withers, it dies, it is weak and produces little beauty. So, not only do healthy plants need strong roots, so do people.

How do people grow good roots? Is it from the space in which one is grown? Some of us grew up well-nourished and dearly loved yet crash and burn when hard times hit. Others tell stories of growing up without love and a strong supportive family and credit their hard childhoods with leading them to Jesus. While our earthly environment contributes to good roots, we need more. We cannot depend on the roots of others to hold and strengthen us. No matter the environment around us, we must push deep on our own. We must constantly seek God's love, His provision, His safety. God is constant and unchanging unlike the elements around us. Only He can nourish us and help us grow.

My growing up years created a safe, loving environment for growing deep spiritual roots. In the months and years after the loss of our eleven-year-old daughter, Ashley, horrific grief blew apart my beautiful family. Anyone observing us saw a tsunami pushing us down, bending and twisting us with a force we could never withstand on our own. But oh those root. Those roots seemed to grow deeper, tightly winding around the truths of Scripture. Unbeknownst to me, those roots buried deep in the soil of God's love pushed their way through the crevices of the Rock on which all of my life depended. In the darkness, the Lord nourished my broken heart by pushing the truth of His Word through those roots.

The Psalmist writes:

*Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on His law he meditates day and night.*

*He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.*

Psalm 1:1-3

Is the sun shining in your life? Now is the time to grow deep roots into the soil of God's Word and when the storms come, and they will, the Lord promises those roots will hold and one day you will bear sweet fruit, sweeter because of those storms.

Good roots, good fruit. Weak roots, bad fruit.

PRAYER

Oh Lord! Thank you for being a stream of living water for me to reach out to. Stretch my roots deeper each day. May Your nourishment flow through them. Help me to seek only You for my strength. Thank you that I do not need to rely on those around me, not

even my family or my home to be my strength. I know that those things can and will change, but You, Oh Lord will never change. You are a constant source of strength to draw from. Help me to produce fruit, good fruit in my life, fruit that reflect you.

