



Luke 13:6-9 (NRSV)

⁶Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. ⁷So he said to the gardener, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’

⁸He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. ⁹If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

Opening

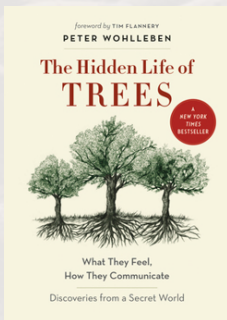
1. **Pray:** Loving God, thank you for having patience and offering us grace. Thank you for never giving up on us, but for showing up when we need you most. Heal us, nourish us, and help us grow fruit of our faith together. Amen
2. **Share:** Have you ever tried to grow a garden, houseplant, or crop that just wouldn't bear fruit or stay alive? What did you try to do to save it?

Dive Into the Text

1. Dead branches prevent a healthy plant from flourishing. What "dead wood" (such as unforgiveness, self-pity, or old habits) might God be inviting you to prune away in this season?
2. The gardener gives special attention to the unseen soil around the roots. What spiritual practices or habits help nourish your hidden, internal life with God when nobody else is looking?
3. True faith moves us beyond ourselves. In what specific ways is your faith encouraging you to look outward and bear fruit in your local community this week?
4. The gardener asks for "one more year" of intentional love and care before giving up on the tree. Have you ever experienced a season where God met you in a hard moment with that kind of patient, second-chance grace?

The Hidden Life of Trees

Peter Wohlleben says that we know less about life in the soil than we do about the ocean floor or the surface of the moon.



"We only know a tiny fraction of what there is to know about the complex life that busy itself under our feet. Up to half of the biomass of a

forest is hidden in this lower story....

There are more lifeforms in a handful of forced soil than there are people on the planet. A mere teaspoonful contains many miles of fungal filaments. All these work, the soil, transform it, and make it so valuable for the trees."

Peter Wohlleben, *The Hidden Life of Trees*



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Go Deeper

1. The gardener cuts away dead wood so the tree can flourish. What dead habit, unresolved resentment, or lingering bitterness in your life needs to be pruned away so your spiritual growth isn't drained?
2. Just as a tree's health depends on the hidden life in the soil, our spiritual vitality relies on what happens beneath the surface. What unseen practice (such as prayer, silence, or scripture intake) do you need to cultivate this week to feed your heart?
3. True faith doesn't stay turned inward—it produces tangible grace for others. What is one specific, practical way you can move beyond yourself to show love to a neighbor or care for your community this week?

Close in Prayer

Close your time in prayer together.