

Seeds of Potential Bible Study
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Scripture References: John 15:16, Matthew 13:3-8, John 15:1-4

My oldest son is currently working his second season at a local pumpkin farm, Bishop's Pumpkin Farm. This pumpkin farm began operations 49 years ago and is well known throughout the region. It is amazing to see the rows and rows of pumpkins, all different shapes, sizes, and colors.

Bishop's Pumpkin Farm is famous for its oversized pumpkins. Earlier this summer I learned the amount of care and attention put into such a crop. For instance, to produce 100-to-200-pound show pumpkins, each plant needs 80 square feet of space to grow. Smaller variety pumpkins do not need this much space. Since a few seeds will fail to germinate and a few plants will die of various causes (rabbits and squirrels), farmers plant a seed every 3.5 ft in 12 ft rows. At a certain point, farmers must thin out the excess plants so larger pumpkins have enough room to grow reaching their full potential.

This process of producing a bumper pumpkin crop reminded me of how God works in the lives of His people.

God Designed Us With A Purpose

Read John 15:16

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.

Similarly, to the farmer selecting which pumpkins to prepare for full maturity, God chose each one of us before we even were aware of it. He is taking the time to care and nurture us to grow according to His purpose for us. Our purpose is to produce fruit, lasting fruit. However, many times we might not want to let Him be in control of our lives. We struggle to allow the adequate amount water (the Holy Spirit), or fertilizer (His Word) penetrate us for growth.

- Have you fully accepted that God has chosen you?
- Are you fully trusting in God's plan for your life? If not, what is causing you not to fully trust in God's plan for you?

God Positions Us to Reach Our Full Potential

Read Matthew 13:3-8

Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

In this scripture we are told of how the farmer scattered the seeds. We know the seeds were probably scattered by hand; however, they were not scattered carelessly. The seeds were probably expensive so the farmer would disburse with care and to the best of his ability.

In the first scene, we see the farmer scattered seed along a walking path or road. Some Bible translations say, ***"some seeds fell by the wayside."*** We are not sure why he would sow seeds here. It could be this soil seemed to be just as good the rest of the field. It could have been soil that was good at one point but turned hard overtime.

In the second scene, we see the farmer scattered seed on the rocky place. This does not mean that it fell on rock, but into the ground where the rock was close to the surface. This would not have been seen by the farmer. When seed falls on this kind of soil there is miraculous growth of the seed. But because there is no depth of the soil so the roots cannot go down and all the strength goes into the stalk.

In the third scene, we see the farmer scattered seed and some fell was among the thorns. This soil was good; however, it was infested by weeds. This was also not visible to the farmer as the roots of the weeds and thorns filled the soil but had yet to emerge above ground. The seeds compete for soil as the thorns grow faster than the seeds and the new sprouts soon get choked by the thorns.

In the fourth scene, we see the farmer scattered seed on good soil. This soil is enriched with the proper hydration and nutrients for a healthy crop. However, the seed still must deal with all the hardships and storms before the crop becomes mature.

There are seasons in your life where you may feel out of place or in the wrong position. You may wonder if God got it wrong or if God was careless in His placement of you. But hold on to these truths: you are valued, and God is meticulous where He wants to you positioned. You may deal with seasons of drought or famine, but God positioned where you are for growth and maturing to your full potential.

- Looking at your life today, what type of soil are you positioned in?
- What steps do you need to take to be in the good soil?

God Prunes Us To Produce Fruit

Read John 15:1-4

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes[a] so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.”

The pumpkin farmer plant seeds near one another, every 3.5 feet in 12-foot rows. As the crops matures the fields quickly become crowded. Some plants are green and leafy but never produce fruit while others sprout pumpkins that are lackluster. So, to produce the best crop of beautiful, full-sized pumpkins, the farmer must conduct some pruning. He must thin out the excessive under producing plants.

There are seasons when life becomes overcrowded by useless and worthless things. If gone unchecked these things can easily stunt our growth and cut off our connection to the Father. God wants to prune and burn away the unnecessary and fruitless things in our lives. This pruning may include the difficult decision of cutting unhealthy relationships or removing negative influences in our lives. When we allow God to complete this process then we can produce the fruit intended for us.

- What things or people do you need to remove from your life and why?