

Moving the Needle

Part 3: Promotion through Pruning

PETER DEWITT
AGATHOS CHURCH
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Full Text (for reading on your own)

It's Time to Move the Needle

It's time to move the needle! It's time for more. For a measurable more. Not just more speed. It's 40mph to 60mph. It's not just more pressure; it's 80 PSI to 100 PSI. A measurable, noticeable increase. It's time to move the needle.

In order to move the needle, we need to first understand that Jesus came to give us life and that life more abundantly! (Jn. 10:10) But the enemy is opposed to the abundant life in us. This is why (in my opinion) why there is so much opposition even within the church against prosperity, the true message of grace, and healings / miracles / signs and wonders. The enemy is opposed to the abundant life.

If we want to see more in our lives, we have to be interested in seeing the “more” in reality - not in theory only! The devil will steal from you wherever you live in theory only. “In theory only” is called religion. It's form, no function. It's form, no fruit. Jesus hates that. In John 10:37, Jesus said “if I don't do the works of my Father, don't believe me.” That's the standard. If we don't do the works of God ...

Bill Johnson see so many miraculous healing at his church in California, but it wasn't always that way. In 1987, he had pastored and preached on healing for 9 years, but never seen a single healing take place. That year, he attended a John Wimber conference where many were healed. Bill heard John use the same analogies he was using, but the results were very different. But in *Healing Unplugged*, Bill says he realized that he needed to require fruit for his beliefs. Shortly thereafter healing started to break out in his church. What made the difference? When he decided “I have to have it! I have to have the fruit to go along with the belief.” The first key to having more is getting to the point of demanding fruit from our beliefs. Getting to the point that “we have to see it!”

When I was first born again, my beautiful wife Megan was a great example to me. Some of our friends said that she has a “healthful heart.” She is just very emotionally whole. Joyful. Buoyant. Nothing really gets her down. Now, I was a new believer so those same descriptors were not accurate of me! (When you get saved, it doesn't fix all of your emotions. It gives you the capacity to have them fixed, but it doesn't fix them automatically for you.) So, for me I was often anxious, often “heavy” and stressed. (By the way, stress is an “inside job.” It is not circumstantial. It is your choice. If you have a problem with stress, you just have a problem with choices. You can chose to think

differently and stress can go away.) But, because I saw Megan walking in such wholeness, it made me feel like “I’ve got to have THAT in my life!”

That’s the pivotal thing - when we get hungry to see His word manifest in our lives in a noticeable way. But, what we often do is chuck a half-hearted prayer up to God to receive the growing pressure of hope in our hearts. It is making you uncomfortable because you want to see it come to pass so you say “Oh Lord, give that to me.” But instead you often need to steward that hunger! You see the fruit in someone else’s life, which removes unbelief. Then you can get in the word, see more testimonies, start reading, and God’s truth will start piling up in your heart like logs in a fire pit. It will be a branch here, twig there, split log there, a big log there; the Word of God starts to pile up in your heart. You have a hunger for it, so you are going searching for it. The unbelief you used to have has been largely removed because you are seeing it around you “wow, they’ve got it! They’re seeing that fruit!” As the Word continues to pile up in your heart, an amazing thing happens - the fire of God falls on those logs! Faith explodes in your heart for that thing and now you see it come to pass. But you have to go through the gathering process and trust that as that pressure is building in you the Holy Spirit is going to come and breath on that and it is going to come alive to you. That’s the process of revelation, the process of faith, where it bursts forth in your own heart.

But it is a process. You have to commit to the process. You have to get hungry enough that you will do whatever it takes to see it come to pass. Bill Johnson says “sometimes you are hungry enough to send someone else into the kitchen to get you a banana. If someone else is there you will ask them to bring it to you, but you are not hungry enough to get out of the Lazy Boy and go get it for yourself.”

It’s a season for a “measurable more” and you have to find the hunger that the Lord is stirring in your heart. Hebrews 11:1 (ESV) says faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not (yet) seen. Faith is a conviction! John 16 says the Holy Spirit will come to convict the world of sin. Is He convicting believers of sin? Not according to that verse! And subsequently in John 16, Jesus makes it clear what sin the Holy Spirit is going to convict the world of - not believing in Jesus! But as believers, we read Hebrews 11:1 and it says that faith is a conviction of things not yet seen.

The Holy Spirit is wanting to convict you of things in the Kingdom that you haven’t seen yet. You should tell the Holy Spirit “convict me of what I have not yet seen! Make me hungry for what I have not seen! Make it something that I have to have!” I pray that hunger for what you haven’t seen would get so all over you that you can’t get it off! Because that’s when you are going to press in. That’s when you’re going to see it come to pass! But you have to get to the point that the conviction for what you haven’t seen yet in the kingdom overtakes you and you say “I’ve got to see it!”

The first time I was exposed to prophetic ministry, it’s accuracy was mind-blowing to me! I walked away from that gathering thinking “wow, Acts of the Apostles is real!” And a hunger for the

prophetic started to grow in me. I got hungry. I thought “I don't get this yet. I haven't walked in this yet.” But I had seen it in practice, I knew it was in His Word. I've read it and read it and read it before, but now I've seen it, there are no excuses ... I've got to see it in my life! That started for me a couple of year process of pressing into the prophetic and then it became routine to operate in the prophetic and hear the voice of God for people. So much so that I find myself thinking at times “am I operating in the prophetic, or was that word of wisdom, or just what I know!?” I can't even tell the difference sometimes anymore because it has become routine.

But you have to get hungry to the point that you have to see it! So I pray that the conviction of the Holy Spirit would be on you. Not about sin but about what you haven't seen yet in the Kingdom! Blessed are those that hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied. It's time to move the needle!

We have to value fruitfulness! Jesus said to not believe Him if He didn't bear the fruit of Heaven. That shows His value of fruitfulness. James 2 says that faith is dead if it doesn't have works! Conviction means to see with the Holy Spirit - to see what He sees for your future.

Fruitfulness is Natural for Believers!

In John 15:1-4, Jesus says *“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.”*

Let's look at the verse that says *“Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away.”* I was listening to an Eric Johnson message and he highlighted a very important truth. The verbiage in this verse “takes away” is not the primary translation for the Greek there. The primary translation of the Greek word there is “lifts up.” It turns out that when Eric researched vine dressing that young branches often run along the ground so the vinedressers will come and lift those branches up, clean them off with water so they are not covered with the muck of earth anymore and they put them onto the trellis. So instead, it would read *“Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He **lifts up.**”* So, every branch that is IN JESUS, and doesn't (yet) bear fruit (because it is a young branch), the Father lifts up. Why does He do that? Because they need some support because they are young. Lift them up, clean them up, tie them up - get them supported!

This causes *“You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.”* to make so much more sense! Jesus is saying “hey, you disciples, I've been talking to you. I've already got you raised up off the ground. I've already got you connected to the trellis. I've already cleaned you off with the water of the Word (just like Hebrews 10 refers to the washing of the water of the Word which cleanses your conscience).” This is the encouragement. If you are not bearing much fruit, the Father's heart is to lift you up - not to cast you out! Verse 6 talks about people being cast out. That talks about people who are operating in the flesh and don't want to be connected to God. If they don't want to be connected to God, He won't force them so sure they can be cast out. They cast

themselves out. That's a sad thing, but it's there choice. But verse 2 says "every branch in Me." You can't get cast out if you are in Him! So, if you don't bear fruit, He's going to lift you up, clean you off, and get you set up to start bearing fruit.

But if you bear fruit already, He's going to prune you. *"And every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit."* I am speaking about fruitfulness and moving the needle, "measurable more," more fruit, and demanding fruit for our beliefs. What Jesus shares in John 15:2 is one of the strongest scriptures about the pathway to "more fruit." What's the pathway to more fruit? Pruning. Pruning is the pathway to more fruit. If you bear fruit, the Father is going to prune you.

Remember, fruitfulness is natural for a believer. And when I say fruitfulness, let me define it 2 ways. There are the fruitful good works that God has prepared for us ahead of time that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:10). There are works that are good fruit, but then there are also fruitful ways to do those works. The ways are shown in Galatians 5 - the fruit of the Spirit "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control." Those are the Godly, fruitful ways that we do things! There are the "works" and the "ways" and they are both essential to bearing kingdom fruit.

The fruit, by analogy, is the letter - not the mailman. By analogy, the fruit is the electricity - not the wire. By analogy, the fruit is the strawberry milkshake - not the straw. The fruit is about the vine, not about the branches. You're a conduit, not "the stuff." Fruitfulness is not about you; it's about Jesus! The more we try to make it about us, the more we constrict the flow. "I've got to be a better, thicker, bigger straw" and you start to develop the walls of your straw until the straw is so thick-walled that only a little, tiny trickle can make its way through that straw - because you made it all about you. This is practical! When I get ready to speak to groups, if I am focused on me, the flow is constricted and I am left thinking 'where did the flow go?' But if I let it be about Him moving through me and stay aware of His presence on me, the flow continues in and through me.

This takes the burden off of us! It is natural for you to bear fruit as a believer! It is natural for rivers of living waters to flow forth from our belly. It is not about being a great branch, it's about being connected to the True Vine. Remember that works for righteousness is always about our performance. Grace is always about receiving. John 15 so clearly depicts the grace-fueled life. All the necessities for fruit are coming from the vine. Your connection to Him is all that's necessary. You just let it flow and the fruit will grow.

Pruning - the Pathway to More Fruit!

Bearing fruit as a believer is natural! But more fruit only comes one way - through pruning! *"And every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit."* So why does God prune you? There is only one reason He prunes you - that you would bear more fruit. And there is only one way you are going to bear more kingdom fruit. You bear more fruit by being pruned. It's so

simple! Eric Johnson says “pruning always equals promotion & all promotion comes with pruning.” If you get promoted, you will need pruned. Why? Because the promotion requires more fruit!

Here’s my example. I am going for signs, wonders, healing, miracles, etc. I have seen those things before, but not as much over the last few years because I had lost focus on it. But over the last while, I am renewing my focus on it. The Lord told me He want me to be this hungry for those things 3 months from now. So, as I was sitting in the airport, I was reading the Word and John 5:44 jumped out at me. *“How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?”* Jesus is offering an absolute key to belief. I am seeking God for more powerful results in my ministry to others and God is giving me a secret right here. He is saying how can you believe for that next level of breakthrough if you are seeking honor from men and not from God?

Now this is not the first time the Lord has worked with me on the fear of man and not being driven by the honor of men. I remember when I was first born again it was a stretch for me to confess Christ in front of an audience. Then some years later I remember when Brad started taking me out to evangelize pro-actively in malls. He could tell you that I was a mess. That was a stretch for me. Fear of man was getting routed out. But that would not be a stretch now. It is a delight for me to share the gospel now.

While confessing Christ and sharing the gospel are not a stretch for me now, on that same day I was sitting in the airport reeding John 5:44, there was a stretch for me. An elderly lady sat down next to me at the airport gate while our flight was delayed. I knew the Lord was going to have me talk to her. She said that her right eye has gone blind and she cannot read any more. I think to myself “you should pray for her.” And then I think “no!” And then I think to myself “you should pray for her.” And again I think “no!” I finally start having the faith to pray for this lady, but a young couple had sat down next to us. I realized that they were going to surely hear me pray for her. The people on the other side of our row of chairs were surely going to hear me pray for that blind eye. I realized that I was more concerned about those people hearing me pray for this blind eye than I was about actually praying for this blind eye. Wow, I thought! That's John 5:44! God is working on me!

What is Pruning?

So, what is happening with me and John 5:44 right now? I am getting pruned! What is pruning? Pruning is losing some of you in order to gain more of Him. Pruning is losing some of you in order to produce more of Him. John Wimber said the greatest mark of Christian maturity is a “quick willingness” to leave behind all of who you are in order to gain even just a little bit more of Him! It’s a quick willingness to be pruned - to lose some of who you are in order to gain more of Him! That’s a humble branch. John Wimber’s phrasing comes from humility. What’s the result of that? Tremendous fruit! Very fruitful!

So, what does pruning look like? It can look like being in the Word and as you are in the Word, He changes you. He removes things. The Word speaks to things in your heart *“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”* (Heb. 4:12) Pruning can look like being in the Word. Romans 12:2 says *“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”* In other words, when you are transformed by the renewing of your minds, you bear Kingdom fruit (prove God’s perfect will) ... sounds like pruning!

Hebrews 12, verses 5b and 11 say *“My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him ... Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”* So what does chastening yield? Fruit! Instead of trying to define pruning too narrowly, it’s helpful to see that these are all kind of facets of the same thing. Pruning looks like Romans 12:2 - being transformed by the renewing of our mind. Pruning looks like being chastened as sons (Heb. 12). Pruning can also look like sheep with a shepherd. The shepherd directs the sheep. He keeps the sheep in one area. He moves them to a new area when necessary.

Pruning can be small in scale, medium, or large. Pruning can be small (with your thumb),



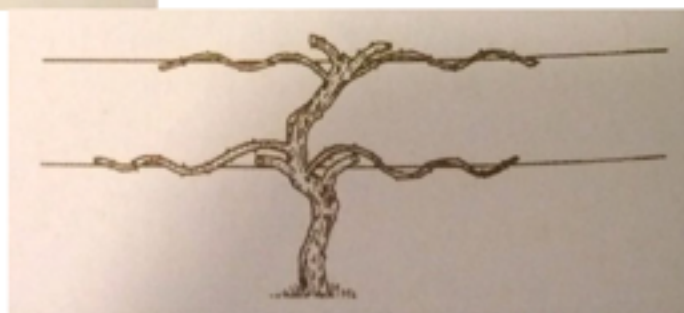
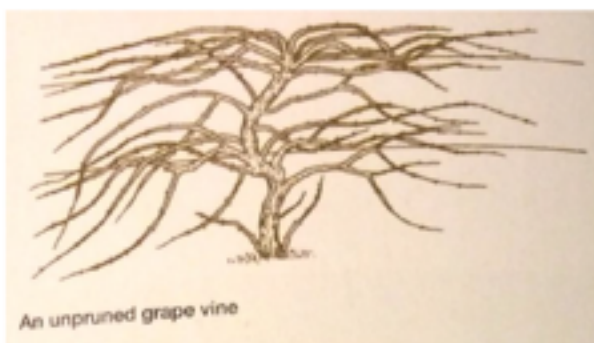
Degrees of Pruning

From Lee Reich, *The Pruning Book*

medium (like the middle photo), or large (ouch!). In my experience, if I stay closer to the Lord more consistently, often what happens is I get more of this sort of “nip it in the bud” type pruning. There

is benefit to staying close to the Lord. We've all seen before how you can let a small shoot grow on a tree to the point that you need to hire a tree service to come take care of it. So, if you stay close to the Lord you can nip in the bud. BUT, staying close to God does not guarantee that you will never have one of the big pruning events like on the right. Remember the sheep and the shepherd? Sometimes God will move you to a whole new territory. You have been closer than close to the Lord and all of a sudden, over a period of 3 months, it becomes clear to you that your career is going to change. Wow. You are thinking "my previous career is a whole big part of my ministry and I have all this fruit out here on this career branch - on this part of the branch of who I am." And the Lord says "I know, but we are going to prune you so that you bear more fruit. It's time for a promotion." It might not be that you were doing anything wrong or you were not close to Him it is just that this is a major, life-changing pruning event. You are getting repositioned for something new. So, being close to Him helps, but it doesn't mean that you won't have any major pruning.

Now, let's look at the extent of pruning a grape vine. Pruning for grape vines is radical! More than 75% of the previous year's growth needs removed. What happens is all the branches grow and



Extent of Pruning

From Lee Reich, *The Pruning Book*

grow away from the vine but all of the fruitfulness in grapevines comes from the little tiny nodes that are very close to the vine. It's a constant pruning process. Even grapevines that are 150 years old in Napa Valley need pruned.

Some Helpful Pruning Tips

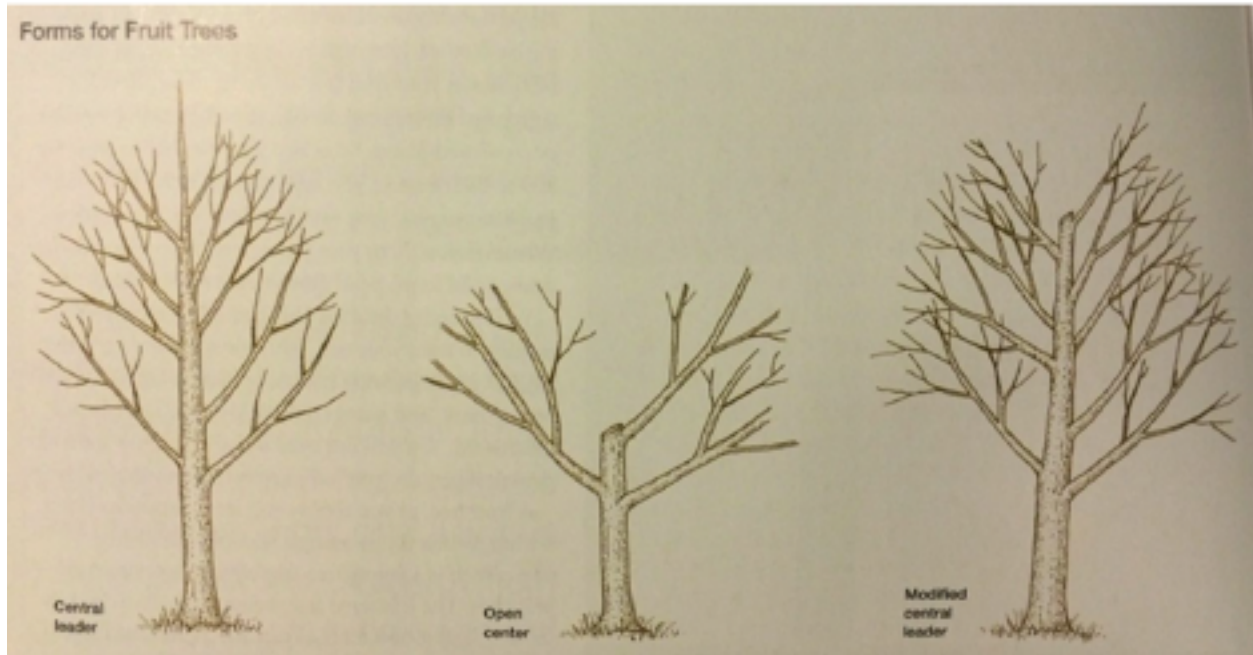
Pruning is progressive. Remember I said I've done "fear of man" pruning before? I can think of 4 or 5 distinct level raises I've had in terms of being free of the fear of man. But, it's time for another! Don't feel bad when it is time for another pruning around the same area. Think of it like this ... Expectations for table manners for 2 year olds, 6 year olds, 10 year olds, and 16 year olds are quite different. You will chastise them differently for different behaviors at different ages. Pruning is progressive. The fact that parents are re-addressing table manners with a child at different ages does not signify failure on the part of the child, it is commensurate with growth! Don't resent going around the same mountain. Very likely God is wanting to promote you to a new level than you've seen before. Ask Him "what's changed? Why is this coming back up? What are you wanting to do with me more than I've seen before?"

Pruning Should increase our Confidence in Bearing Fruit! Don't let pruning shake your confidence in terms of bearing fruit. Don't let pruning make you timid to get back out on the field. Think about this scripturally, what does it mean when we are pruned?

1. John 15:2 tells us that being pruned is an indication that we were already bearing fruit! Every branch in Jesus that bears fruit, He prunes that it may bear more fruit! So, if you are getting pruned it means that you are bearing fruit!
2. We also know from John 15:4 that you cannot do anything unless you abide in Him! You cannot bear any fruit unless you are in Christ. So if you are being pruned it means that you are in Him!
3. It also means that you are just like everyone else in our church and every superstar of the faith you've ever heard of! *"EVERY branch that bears fruit He prunes."* Every branch! Every branch - including Peter, Paul, etc. Paul opposed Peter to his face. That was a pruning from God through Paul!
4. It means we are legitimate children (Heb. 12:7-8) *"If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? **8** But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons."*
5. It means you are better positioned to be MORE FRUITFUL than you have ever been! Don't resent being pruned! Don't lose your confidence when you are pruned! Why would you feel bad for being in Him, bearing fruit for Him, being a legitimate child, and and better equipped to serve the Lord than ever before!?!?

Trust God to Prune You Sometimes He has plans for you that you don't know yet. We may think "God, why do you push on me so hard about this issue? It seems like other people are not held so tightly by You about that." The Lord would say to you "wait and see what I have in store." We have

to trust that God knows what He has in store for you. He knows the direction He wants to take you. God will prune some of us differently for different callings. Look at the different, but equally effective pruning methods for apple trees below:



Styles of Pruning

From Lee Reich, *The Pruning Book*

Depending on how the Lord wants to work through you in the future, He will train you up in the way that you should go! So, don't resent Him operating differently with you. You have to trust Him that He knows the future plans that He has for you! He might be pruning you today for your tomorrow. We will always lose something when we are pruned. We know that God only prunes for one reason ... to increase our fruitfulness. He only removes to add more and better. *"Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life."* (Mark 10:29-30)

The Childlike Receive more Pruning ... WHICH IS GOOD! When children are given iPhones or iPads they figure them out in minutes through trial and error. When the elderly are given them, the result is different. Why? Because children are humble enough to learn by trial and error. The more childlike you are, the more you act, and the more you act on His Word, the more you grow, and the more you grow, the more pruning you will need!

The goal of pruning is NOT to avoid it ... but to embrace it. Even 150 year old vines in California still need pruned. Don't make parts of yourself off limits to God's adjustments.

Text Summary (for reading as a group)

It's time to move the needle! It's time for more - a measurable, noticeable increase. In order to move the needle, we need to first understand that Jesus came to give us life and that life more abundantly! not in theory only, but in reality! (Jn. 10:10) "In theory only" is called religion. It's form, no function. It's form, no fruit. Jesus hates that. In John 10:37, Jesus said "if I don't do the works of my Father, don't believe me." That's the standard. If we don't do the works of God ... don't believe us.

For Bill Johnson, demanding fruit from his beliefs, getting to the point that "we have to see it!", was a key to starting to see breakthrough in healing. Personally, when Peter saw Megan walking in such wholeness, it made me feel like "I've got to have THAT in my life!" That's the pivotal thing - when we get hungry to see His word manifest in our lives in a noticeable way. You see the fruit in someone else's life, which removes unbelief. Then you can get in the word, see more testimonies, start reading, and God's truth will start piling up in your heart like logs in a fire pit. You have a hunger for it, so you are going searching for it. As the Word continues to pile up in your heart, an amazing thing happens - the fire of God falls on those logs! Faith explodes in your heart for that thing and now you see it come to pass. That's the process of revelation, the process of faith, where it bursts forth in your own heart.

But it is a process. You have to commit to the process. You have to get hungry enough that you will do whatever it takes to see it come to pass. Hebrews 11:1 (ESV) says faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not (yet) seen. Faith is a conviction! John 16 says the Holy Spirit will come to convict the world of sin. Is He convicting believers of sin? Not according to that verse! The Holy Spirit is going to convict the world of - not believing in Jesus! But as believers, we read Hebrews 11:1 and it says that faith is a conviction of things not yet seen. The Holy Spirit is wanting to convict you of things in the Kingdom that you haven't seen yet.

In John 15:1-4, Jesus says *"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me."* A better translation of verse 2 would be *"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He **lifts up**."* So, every branch that is IN JESUS, and doesn't (yet) bear fruit (because it is a young branch), the Father lifts up. Why does He do that? Because they need some support because they are young. Lift them up, clean them up, tie them up - get them supported! This causes the next verse *"You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you."* to make much more sense!

This is the encouragement. If you are not bearing much fruit, the Father's heart is to lift you up - not to cast you out! Verse 6 talks about people being cast out. That verse talks about people who are operating in the flesh and don't want to be connected to God. But verse 2 says "every branch in Me."

You can't get cast out if you are in Him! So, if you don't bear fruit, He's going to lift you up, clean you off, and get you set up to start bearing fruit.

Remember, fruitfulness is natural for a believer. Fruitfulness consists of both fruitful "works" (Eph. 2:10) and fruitful "ways" (Galatians 5); they are both essential to bearing kingdom fruit. Bearing the fruit is about the vine, not about the branches. You're a conduit, not "the stuff." Fruitfulness is not about you; it's about Jesus! The more we try to make it about us, the more we constrict the flow. This takes the burden off of us! It is not about being a great branch, it's about being connected to the True Vine. Remember that works for righteousness is always about our performance. Grace is always about receiving. John 15 so clearly depicts the grace-fueled life. All the necessities for fruit are coming from the vine. Your connection to Him is all that's necessary. You just let it flow and the fruit will grow.

While bearing fruit as a believer is natural, more fruit only comes one way - through pruning! *"And every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit."* There is only one reason God prunes you - that you would bear more fruit. And there is only one way you are going to bear more kingdom fruit; you bear more fruit by being pruned. As Eric Johnson says "pruning always equals promotion & all promotion comes with pruning." So, what is pruning? Pruning is losing some of you in order to produce more of Him. John Wimber said the greatest mark of Christian maturity is a "quick willingness" to leave behind all of who you are in order to gain even just a little bit more of Him! It's a quick willingness to be pruned - to lose some of who you are in order to produce more of Him! That's a humble branch - which will be very fruitful!

So, what does pruning look like? Pruning looks like Romans 12:2 - being transformed by the renewing of our mind. Pruning looks like being chastened as sons (Heb. 12). Pruning can also look like sheep with a shepherd. The shepherd directs the sheep and moves them to a new area when necessary. Pruning can be small (with your thumb), medium (like the with a hand trimmer), or large (ouch!). Generally, the closer we stay to the Lord, the more we get "nip it in the bud" type pruning. BUT, staying close to God does not guarantee that you will never have one of the big pruning events. Big pruning events might not mean that you were doing anything wrong or you were not close to Him it just means you are getting repositioned for something new. Also keep in mind that pruning for grape vines is radical; more than 75% of the previous year's growth needs removed! All of the fruitfulness in grapevines comes from the little tiny nodes that are very close to the vine.

Pruning is progressive. For instance, expectations for table manners for 2 year olds, 6 year olds, 10 year olds, and 16 year olds are quite different. The fact that parents are re-addressing table manners with a child at different ages does not signify failure on the part of the child, it is commensurate with growth!

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when you are pruned! Why would you feel bad for being in Him, bearing fruit for Him, being a legitimate child, and and better equipped to serve the Lord than ever before!?!?

Trust God to Prune You Depending on how the Lord wants to work through you in the future, He will train you up in the way that you should go! So, don't resent Him operating differently with you. You have to trust Him that He knows the future plans that He has for you!

The Childlike Receive more Pruning ... WHICH IS GOOD! Children are humble enough to learn by trial and error. The more childlike you are, the more you act, and the more you act on His Word, the more you grow, and the more you grow, the more pruning you will need!

The goal of pruning is NOT to avoid it ... but to embrace it. Even 150 year old vines in California still need pruned. Don't make parts of yourself off limits to God's adjustments.

Points to Ponder . . .

- What is God's purpose for pruning?
- How does God prune us?
- How can we help the pruning process?
- What's one thing about being pruned by the Lord that you understand better now than before?