



To Grow: to increase by natural development

****Our natural development comes from His Word:***

*-1 Pet 2:2 "...crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may **grow** up in your salvation"*

-1 Pet 3:18 "But grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

****Our natural development comes from living by His Spirit:***

*-Gal 5:22-26 "...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control...Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited (*putting focus on self*), provoking and envying each other (*putting focus on others*)."* -parentheses added

****Our natural development comes from painful experiences:***

-Romans 5:3-4 "...but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance character; and character hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom he has given us."

-James 1:2 "Consider it pure joy my brothers whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

****Our natural development comes from asking Him:***

-James 1:5 "If anyone lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."

-Psalm 51:10 "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me...Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me."

****Our natural development comes from keeping our focus on Him***

- *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will NOT grow weary and lose heart." Hebrews 12:1-3*

- *A lot of times we focus on what we can do to make ourselves grow or on what others are doing. One thing we all have in common is that we have growing to do. None of us have arrived. The cool and loving thing about God is he has a race marked out for each of us so we don't have to look to our left or to our right, but only to Him.*

Now

"To him who is able keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy- to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forever more! Amen."(Jude1:24)



April Williams

TO GROW...A LESSON FROM THE GARDEN, PART 3

I've worked really hard this year planning and planting my garden, and bringing the lawn back from the dead. It's been a little more fun this year because our next door neighbors are doing the same, and we have a lot of over-the-fence conferences on our different techniques of gardening. One thing we both agree on is the incredible nuisance the trees that grow behind our houses are! They belong to the common area of our neighborhood and so we can do nothing but try to control their mess, or move, which is not really an option. The trees block a lot of the sun we need in our back yards to grow plants and grass. They shed all year, and for two months in spring they send out these little cotton spores, millions of them, that find their way into EVERY nook and cranny and planter-pot in our yard and garden, even the cracks in the driveway. So every day I go out and clear out my garden and blow them off the patio, and pull up the many little sprouts that have started to grow. I've asked other gardeners for ideas on how to control them. In researching how to keep them from growing in my garden I found this information in an article:

"A weed is actually a plant with a couple of specific characteristics... They produce many seeds which can survive for a long time. They spread very fast. They compete with other plants for resources like water, land, and sunlight. They make your lawn and garden look unruly and messy. Weeds can easily get out of control and ruin your garden and lawn, so it's important to take action early before the problem becomes a disaster."

Yep.

As I was doing a quiet time on my patio and contemplating this, I thought of how our sinful natures are much like weeds. They are deep rooted and can come to the surface quickly and interfere and mess up our relationships, marriages, and our source of Light (God's Word). They need to be attended to daily, otherwise they can grow into an unmanageable mess. We need to reach out for advice on the particularly difficult ones. The apostle Paul wrote in Romans 7:15

about his seemingly impossible struggle with his sinful nature. He concludes in Romans 8:37-39:

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We can be "more than conquerors" with God!

I'm still searching for a solution to my back yard problem, but when it comes to our sinful natures, the best "weed" killer out there is a daily dose, and application, of God's Word!

Toni LaGatta

