

CUTTING IT OUT IS HEALTHY FOR GROWTH

SCRIPTURE:

Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. (1 Corinthians 5: 6,7)

MATERIALS LIST:

- (1) Garden Pruners
- (1) Branch from a Shrub

MAIN MESSAGE:

In order for the shrub to grow more full, you have to trim from time-to-time. In order for a tree to grow tall, you have to cut back the “suckers” from the base. In our lives, we need to cut out what’s keeping us from growing into the fullness of what God wants for our family.

SONG: “Purer in Heart, O God”

LESSON:

Some people have a “green-thumb” and others, the “thumb of death”. I happen to fall into the later category. Once, while in college, I thought it would be very neat to get a bonsai tree and place it in my room. For some reason, I have liked the micro version of things for some time. Just to see a small model car with all the details of a full car was captivating to me. This bonsai tree was the same. I would spend time envisioning tiny people walking up to it and taking shade under it’s beautiful branches. I know, typing it now sounds very strange for me as well.

One day, I decided I would be proactive and help the tree grow. Only having learned by accident, I knew that if you prune a shrub, it will grow more fully as more sunlight is allowed in, there’s less competition for the nutrients, and and disease that might have been present is cut away. Well, in my “I am smarter than I look” college mind, I decided if a little pruning was good, then a lot of pruning would be better. So... I began to cut and prune away every single bit of green that was on that tree. When I finished, It looked like a pitiful little dog that had just been shaved to the skin. It appeared as if it just wanted to shiver as the cool air in the room struck it’s bare branches.

You guessed it, I killed the tree. I was in denial for many months, as I was just sure new growth would occur if I just kept watering it. Being saddened, not that the tree died, but because my pride was hurt, I finally decided to do the only decent thing. I threw the tree out, and I haven’t had a bonsai tree since. I was right about the pruning, I was very wrong in the amount.

Physically, the shrub or tree will be more healthy with proper pruning. Spiritually speaking, when we prune out the dead, diseased, and overgrown portions of our lives, we will be able to grow into the fullness of what God has in store for us. When we get rid of the “old leaven” we will be much healthier.

Show your children the shears, explain the cutting back idea on shrubs and trees. Explain how when a cut is made, the shrub grows out in multiple directions making it more full. Explain how the “suckers” at the bottom take the best of the nutrients away from the top. Discuss what needs to be trimmed back in your family. What is holding the spiritual growth back from your family?

PRAYER: Give our family the courage and drive to trim out what’s holding us from growing spiritually.