

PRUNED FOR PURPOSE

John 15:1-2 (NIV) *"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 so that it will be even more fruitful."*

- You are either being 'cut off' (removed because of no output) or 'cut back' (runed because of high potential). Both require the blade.

Genesis 2:15 (NIV) *The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it take care of it. (...to tend and keep it)*

- God provides the garden, but He hands us the tools to maintain it.

Hosea 10:12 (NIV) *Sow righteousness for yourselves, reap the fruit of unfailing love (mercy), and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers his righteousness on you.*

- We must break up the 'hard ground' which is the heart...and make it ready for the seeds of the Spirit

1 Corinthians 3:6-7 (NIV) *"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow."*

- Cultivation is a partnership. We do the planting and the watering, but we must respond to the Gardener who provides the increase – making it grow and have life.

When it's time to plant, there are a host of areas that must be considered. For this lesson, we will look at three areas that many don't want to have to deal with: Pulling Weeds; The Bugs; and The Mud.

If the **Weed** is the 'thief' of your potential, then **Wisdom** is the 'investment' in your future. Below are the six areas of the SOUL – identifying the 'weeds' (what to remove) AND the 'wisdom' (what to cultivate).

WEEDS (What to Remove) vs WISDOM (What to Cultivate)

To truly cultivate the garden, we can't just focus on what to pull out (weeds); we have to know what to plant and protect (wisdom).

The Mind: Mind is the processing center – it's where we identify what is a Weed and what is a Seed. Cultivating the mind involved 'renewing' it so we don't misidentify God's tools as burdens.

- The *Weed*: **Strongholds** or negative thought patterns (stinking thinking) that tell us that mud is permanent.

PRUNED FOR PURPOSE

- The *Wisdom*: **Discernment** - The ability to see things as God sees them, transforming information into revelation
- The *Scripture*: **James 3:17-18** *“But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit...Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.”*
 - o This is the ultimate Soil Analysis for the **Mind**. If the wisdom isn't producing these specific fruits, you've planted the wrong seed

The Will: Your decision-making faculty. We can know we have weeds (Mind), but the **Will** is what actually bends down to pull them up. It's the engine of obedience

- The *Weed*: Indecision - A will that refuses to sweat in the garden robs the Gardener of His harvest.. Passive 'wait and see' attitude that refuses to do the heavy lifting of obedience
- The *Wisdom*: **Fortitude** – The steady resolve to say "Yes" to the Gardener even when the work is exhausting.
- The *Scripture*: **Proverbs 24:30-34** *“I went past the field of a sluggard... thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds... I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw.”*
 - o This is a perfect illustration for the **Will** – a soul 'locked from the inside' by passivity will always be overrun by weeds.

The Heart: Seat of your convictions. If the heart is hardened, the water (the Word) just runs off the surface instead of reaching the roots.

- The *Weed*: **Hardness** or bitterness from past seasons that prevents new growth. Calloused areas where past pain has made the ground impenetrable to the Word
- The *Wisdom*: **Pliability** – Keeping a "tender" spirit that allows God's instructions to take deep, lasting root.
- The *Scripture*: **Proverbs 4:23** *"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."*
 - o This is the "Fence" around your garden. If you don't guard the **Heart**, the "bugs" of bitterness will eat the crop before it can ripen.

Affections: These are your "likes" and "dislikes"—what you are drawn toward. We grow toward what we love. If our affections are set on "wildflowers" (worldly distractions), we neglect the fruit the Gardener actually asked for.

- The *Weed*: **Distraction** - Misplaced desires that drain energy away from our primary purpose. Loving the "wildflowers" (temporal pleasures) more than the fruit (eternal purpose).

PRUNED FOR PURPOSE

- The *Wisdom*: **Prioritization** - Teaching your heart to hunger for what God loves, ensuring your energy goes to the right crop.
- The *Scripture*: **Colossians 3:1–2** *"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."*
 - o When we intentionally "set" our affections, we ensure our growth is directed toward the Son. This prevents us from being "robbed" by temporal distractions that have no eternal harvest.

Aspirations: Your ambition and "reach." Like a vine needs a trellis to grow upward rather than tangling on the ground, our aspirations must be aimed toward God's goals, not just personal success.

- The *Weed*: **Self-promotion**...Self-glorification or "creeping" ambitions that stay at ground level. Ambition that grows horizontally to cover more ground rather than vertically toward God.
- The *Wisdom*: **Alignment** - Aiming your goals toward the "Upper Room" so that your growth serves His Kingdom, not your ego.
- The *Scripture*: **Philippians 3:13–14** *"Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."*
 - o Keeps our growth from staying at ground level. Wisdom ensures our "reach" is for His prize and His purpose, rather than just seeking to cover more territory for ourselves.

Imagination: The ability to see the fruit before it appears. The imagination allows us to endure the "mud" and the "bugs" because we can already taste the harvest.

- The *Weed*: **Fearful Imaging** or "doomsday" imaging that sees only pestilence and never the potential.
- The *Wisdom*: **Prophetic Vision**: The holy ability to "see" the harvest in the seed and the beauty in the mud.
- The *Scripture*: **Psalms 1:1-3** *"He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season..."*
 - o Connects the **Imagination** (meditating on the Word) to the actual physical output of the garden

Wisdom in the **Mind** teaches us that "bugs" are often just part of the ecosystem—they test the strength of the plant. Wisdom in the **Will** teaches us that "mud" is the only place where the nutrients are actually accessible.

PRUNED FOR PURPOSE

BUGS...In a physical garden, a sterile environment is a dead environment. You actually need insects for a harvest. Bugs aren't just pests; they are **Processors (pride; test strength)** Spiritually, the "bugs" (critics, irritations, minor trials) serve three vital purposes:

- **Cross-Pollination (New Ideas):** Bees and butterflies are technically "bugs." They carry pollen from one plant to another. Wisdom suggests that God uses "messy" interactions with others to bring a word or an idea from their garden into yours. Without the "fly-in" visitor, your soul stays isolated and fails to reproduce.
- **Decomposition (Breaking Down the Old):** Many bugs (like beetles or worms) feed on decaying matter. In your soul, there are things that *need* to die—old habits, dead ego, past regrets. The "bugs" of life—those nagging uncomfortable situations—often feed on our pride until it's broken down into something the soil can actually use. They help "clear the floor" of the soul.
- **The Stress Test (Building Immunity):** Plants that grow in a perfectly controlled greenhouse are weak. When a plant is nibbled on by a bug, it often triggers a "defense response" where the plant produces more phytochemicals and strengthens its cell walls.

The Wisdom: The "bugs" in your life (the people who bug you, the circumstances that bite) are actually forcing your **Will** and **Heart** to toughen up. They are building your spiritual immunity.

MUD...If you have dry soil and you throw a handful of fertilizer (the Word/Resources) on it, nothing happens. The nutrients just sit on top, dormant.

- **The Solvent Principle:** Nutrients in the soil are chemically locked in "salt" or mineral forms. A plant cannot "eat" a rock. The nutrients **must** be dissolved in water to be absorbed by the roots. Mud is the state where the "Water of the Word" has successfully saturated the "Soil of the Mind."
- **Capillary Action:** In bone-dry dirt, there is no path for the nutrients to move. In mud, the water creates a highway. It allows the minerals to flow directly into the root system.

The Soul Connection: When you are in a "muddy" season—where things feel messy, heavy, and "sticky"—it's actually the only time your **Heart** is soft enough to absorb the heavy-duty nutrients God is trying to give you. You can't absorb "Long-suffering" or "Peace" in a dry, easy season. You absorb them when the situation is muddy enough for those virtues to dissolve into your spirit.

- **Anchor Strength:** It is much easier to pull a plant out of dry, loose sand than it is to pull one out of thick, heavy mud. Mud "grips" the roots. A muddy season is often God's way of "locking" you into your purpose so that when the wind blows, you don't wash away.