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Becoming A Tree

My dad was a farmer in his youth, and I suppose that once a farmer always a farmer. He still loves the outdoors and working with his hands every chance he gets. Living as a farmer is a tough work in real life, and it is not easy by no means. You are always at the mercy of the weather and continually praying for a great harvest.

During the off-season, you work hard and are preparing for the planting time. You repair all the equipment and get the seed and soil ready. The soil must be plowed and turned over to ready it to receive the seed, and then fertilizer is added to supplement the ground. Waiting for the right moment with the correct weather, you quickly plant the seeds of your crop so that it can begin to grow.

During the growth part of the season, you must work endlessly to protect the crop from insects, animals, diseases, and weeds. The entire time praying for favorable weather and that bad storms or drought don't destroy everything. Then comes harvest time, a very short season to collect all the crops when they are ripe and ready.

If everything goes great, then it is a celebration time, but our great farmers have many pitfalls to avoid. I have such respect for farmers because their lives are full of hard work, and just as they finish off the year, they must immediately prepare to do it all over again for every year of their life. If you view your walk with God as a seed and harvest Christian, then you must continuously be planting seeds in order to gain your harvest.

I was a farmer Christian for most of my life because I didn't know there was another way. Then one day, I was sitting on an airplane on the way home from preaching when the Spirit of the Lord spoke to me to look down at my belly button. As I looked down, my entire midsection turned into a tree trunk. I could see the groves in the bark that replaced my waist.

The Lord then spoke to me that from now on, He wanted me to look at myself as a tree and no longer as a farmer. It reads in Psalm 92:12-15, "*The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those who are planted in the house of the LORD Shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; They shall be fresh and flourishing, To declare that the LORD is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.*"

This was a tremendous revelation that the Lord had given me in the way that I was to receive from Him. I had been stuck in an understanding of continually doing things to qualify myself to receive a harvest from my good works. I had a requirement to continuously give and serve if I was to continue to receive from God. I was a farmer faithfully working towards a harvest. A tree also brings in a harvest every season; however, the process is hugely different.

A tree takes years of time to mature. During that time, there is no fruit. But once a tree gains in its maturity, it produces fruit faithfully without effort. All the effort is poured into the tree's growth, and once it's fully grown, if you never touch it again, the fruit will keep coming. This is quite different than the farmer who must continually plant seed every year, and if he skips a season, there is no crop.

I have a little crab apple tree that was in our yard when we purchased our home, I've never helped it, but it still makes fruit every single year. A mature tree will bring forth fruit without trying or without effort, and I believe this is the best way for us to focus on serving God. He still wants fruit from me and service, but He desires for it to come forward out of me because of maturity and not from me trying to gain a harvest by planting seed. Hebrews 4:8-11 says, *"For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience."*

I believe that God's heart for us is this... all the good works that we do from our hearts are as a service and not an effort to earn anything from Him. We are His children and, therefore, heirs to all that He has. He desires to prune us to see more fruit come from our life. God still expects us to give and serve in His kingdom, but the source of why we do these things is essential. I no longer do anything to reap a harvest; instead, all that I do is because of my love for Him.

My right to receive answers of prayer is because I am His child and an heir to His kingdom, not because I sowed a seed and earned a harvest from that seed. My focus has changed to growing stronger and more mature in Him instead of trying to be busy to please Him. I do more for God's kingdom now than ever before, but now it's a fruit that comes forward from my love for Him. I am no longer a farmer, but I am a tree planted in Him. Let's keep growing.

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