

Seeds or Weeds: What Grows in Your Garden?

By Sasha Shillcutt

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such 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. Hebrews 12:1

This summer I decided to grow a vegetable garden. It ended up being bigger than I anticipated and required many hours to maintain. I soon realized most of my time would be spent on my knees in the hot sun, pulling weeds. No matter how great the rows looked after I weeded them, if I neglected them for more than a few days, the jungle would return. Vines, nettles, grass, and even worms grew faster than my well-seeded vegetable plants. They competed for water, nutrients, and sun. The amount of time I did or did not spend in my garden each week was obvious by the results: neat, well-maintained rows with veggies growing on plants; or a chaos of weeds and plants, making it difficult to see any fruit.

After a few hours in my garden, I started thinking of all the rich lessons God was teaching me through my labor. How often is my sin like a weed, fighting to take over the fruit I so desperately ask God to grow in my heart? If you are like me, you probably spend hours talking to God, asking Him to change you in some way, begging or pleading with Him to snap His fingers so that voila! your “weeds” will disappear. But, I ask you, dear sister, have you weeded your garden lately?

Sin, like a weed, is never stagnant. It is constantly growing, inch by inch, weaving its root deeper and its vine farther. It never reaches its maximum capacity and stops; it continues to grow and attach itself to us, becoming more difficult to remove. In fact, it may get so big you cannot remove it with your bare hands. Did you know that a single vine can grow and climb until it destroys even the sturdiest of buildings? Scripture says Satan, the master of lies, “prowls around like a roaring lion,” seeking to destroy (1 Peter 5:8). Sin, left unattended, will grow and devour our hearts, our relationships, and our lives. Each of us knows this sin, we recognize it, and we see it. But what do we do to remove it?

Like my garden, my heart must be weeded on a regular basis. Time must be spent on my knees, putting the work in. Just like I can't ask God to magically remove the weeds in my flower bed, I can't ask Him to remove my sin without doing some “work” to pull it up at the root.

Where is the source of your sin? Have you removed it completely, or have you just cut it at the soil, only to see it sprout again a few days later? The most difficult weeds to remove are often not the ones so tall that everyone can see; but they are the ones with the deepest root. If we want to “fertilize” our gardens and remove the deepest of roots, we must spend time in God's Word, feeding our minds and protecting our thoughts from “the sin that so easily entangles us” (Hebrews 12:1). To me, one of the most beautiful things about my Savior is that He knows how deep the root of my sin goes and He is ready and willing to help me remove it, no matter how long I've neglected it.

Mark 4 says God's Word is like a seed. When it lands on fertilized soil it can grow and produce much fruit. How wonderful! His Word is there not to only help us remove our sin, but to also actually produce wonderful spiritual gifts like peace, kindness and joy! Who doesn't want to harvest those things? Who doesn't want a life rich in His goodness and love?

How deep our joy is when we learn to depend on His Word daily! His produce never stops growing. He is the Giver of all things. His plan is for us to live a full life, a life that is rich in His blessings, free from the vines of sin, guilt and bondage.

My prayer for your sisters is that you, like me, will weed your garden today. And every day. May His fruit grow and grow in you, and may you have a plentiful harvest.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such 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. Hebrews 12:1