

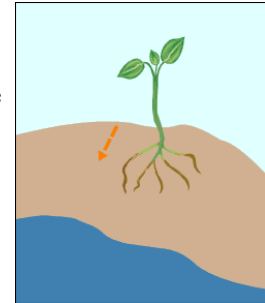
# Rooted In The Word

## By Beth Jones

It's summer time and the best time for certain vegetables to be planted such as beans, leeks, zucchinis, potatoes, swiss chard, lettuce, broccoli, asparagus, and tomatoes. You have to be vigilant about watering your vegetables, weeding, and watching out for bugs in the summer time so your garden will flourish.

If you have poor soil, limited space, and not enough sun in your garden area, you might try growing vegetables in containers, which allow you to have a movable garden with a limited vegetable supply or to produce vegetables that are hard to locate to buy. You can also manage pest better in containers, and container vegetable gardening is a great way to introduce children to gardening.

The downside of container gardening is that the containers need frequent watering and the root system is restricted by the size of the container. Some plants may produce smaller fruit, and some vegetables don't grow well in containers because their roots are confined. (reference: Container Vegetable Garden, <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/1000/1647.html>) Some plants need their roots to go down deep to seek out the water and the nutrients they need, such as tomatoes and asparagus.



Just as some of these summer plants need deep roots to produce the best crop, we as Christians need to be deeply rooted and grounded in God's word.

Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness. (Colossians 2: 7, New Living Translation)

Why do we need God's word?

- It is God's love letter to us (John 1:1, John 3:16, Matthew 4:4, Jeremiah 31:3)
- It lasts forever (Psalm 119:89, 1 Peter 1:23)
- It's the revelation of Jesus Christ (John 1:1, Revelation 19:13)
- It teaches us how to live and to obey God, and gives us wisdom ( Proverbs 3:5-6, James 1:5-6, Isaiah 30:21)
- It is our spiritual food (Jeremiah 15:16, Job 23:12, Matthew 4:4)
- It waters and refreshes us like rain (Deuteronomy 32:2)
- It is given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit for doctrine, reproof, correction, and to instruct us in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16)
- It heals us. (Psalm 147:3, Psalm 103:2-5, Psalm 107:20, Exodus 15:26, 1 Peter 2:24)
- It gives us hope (Psalm 28:7, Hebrews 6:18-19, Colossians 1:4-5, 1 Peter 1:3)
- It is magnified above God's name (Psalm 138:2)
- It is our map and our compass in life. (Psalm 119:105, Psalm 37:23, 1 John 2:27)
- It gives us strength for each day. (Matthew 6:11, Deuteronomy 33:27)
- It steadies us. (Isaiah 35:3, Psalm 119:33, James 1:8)
- It is our source of joy. (Jeremiah 15:16, Isaiah 12:3)

As we can see, the Bible is essential for our lives, so it's important that we grow deep roots in God's word. We develop these roots through daily disciplines such as:

- Prayer
- Worship of God
- Reading, studying, and meditating on God's word
- Fellowship with other believers in Christ
- Obedience to God



Let's look at each one of these.

**Prayer.** As we spend time in prayer each day, we will come to know God our creator intimately as He knows us. We don't have to pray for hours, with a prayer formula, in a certain posture or place. Just pour out your heart to God. Tell him what you think and feel. You don't need to feel ashamed to come to God, or think you have to get "all cleaned up" to pray. God will cleanse you by the power of Jesus' blood. He died so that we could live forever with God in heaven.

You can pray any time, anywhere. God is always there, waiting for you. He's never too busy for you. He loves you unconditionally and will forgive you of your sins. He just wants to be with you. He has a great plan for your life, and wants to use you. As you walk and talk with God each day like Enoch did, your faith and trust in Him will grow. You will hear His voice more clearly. You will become more like Him, maturing in Christ and developing the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life.

**Worship.** God our creator is worthy of our praise and worship. Sing to Him. Dance before Him. Give Him thanks each and every day. Develop a thankful heart, a heart that responds to God in songs of worship and praise. Jesus told the Pharisees that if the disciples kept quiet from praising Him, even the rocks would cry out. (Luke 19:28-40) Worship is so powerful and beautiful. It will give you joy and strength, and it should flow naturally out of our hearts toward God for all that He has done for us and will do. Worship will keep you rooted in God, because it is an appropriate, humble, thankful response to Him.

**Reading, studying, and meditating on God's word.** The Bible is God's love letter to us. It is our daily bread, and shows us how to live right. The Bible is the very thoughts and heart of God. The only way we will get to know God more intimately is to read, study, and apply His word to our lives. Develop a daily discipline of Bible reading and study. You don't have to spend hours each day in the Bible, but as you spend time reading it, your hunger will grow.

You can also use audio Bibles (such as with Bible Gateway online), Bible study tools such as concordances and dictionaries, devotional books like Oswald Chambers' *My Utmost for His Highest* and Mrs. Charles E. Cowman's *Streams in the Desert*, and daily email devotions (I use an email devotional for daily living and a devotional for Christian leaders). The study of God's word will help your spiritual roots to grow deep in Christ, equipping you for ministry and maturing you in Him – fully grown and planted in Christ. (Psalm 1:3)

**Fellowship with other believers in Christ.** We are not an island unto ourselves; as human beings we need each other. The Bible tells us the importance of fellowship with other believers. "Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together [as believers], as is the habit of some people, but admonishing (warning, urging, and encouraging) one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching. (Hebrews 10:25, Amplified Bible) This is true, whether you are a new convert to Christianity or have been walking with God for years.

Spending time with other believers will help us to stay strong in hope and faith, will keep us accountable for our sins, and will sharpen us spiritually. (Proverbs 27: 17) We can learn from, encourage, and pray for each other. We can help each other grow in our roots in Christ.

Obedience to God. We as parents know how frustrating it can be when we tell our children to do something and they don't mind us, especially when we have to tell them again and again. What good would it do us as Christians if we did all of the above spiritual disciplines, but never obeyed God? If we love God, we will obey Him. (1 John 5:2)

Jesus said that we can't do anything without His help. "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5, NLT) We can't obey God apart from the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8:12-13) We need to be filled continually each ay with God's Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) As we obey God every day, our faith roots will grow deeper in Him.

Using our spiritual gifts and fulfilling our calling and purpose. There is a story of a child who died and went to heaven. As Jesus was showing him around heaven to meet all the great men and women of faith, the child looked in awe at John the Baptist, Martin Luther, Charles Spurgeon, and other powerful men of God. He then saw someone he recognized from t.v., Billy Graham, and said, "Billy Graham must have been the greatest preacher who ever lived on earth, huh?" Jesus shook his head sadly and pointed to an old man in the corner. "No, my child," He replied. "THAT man is the greatest preacher there ever was. He chose to be a mailman instead."

Please understand, there is nothing wrong with mailmen. I respect them very much. They are wonderful people and are so faithful to deliver our letters and packages every day, rain, snow, or shine. But the point of the story is that we don't want to bury our talents and spiritual gifts, and never fulfill the great calling God has for our lives. (Matthew 25:18)

God has given us talents and gifts that He wants to use for His glory. He has a specific mission and purpose that He wants us to fulfill for His Kingdom. We need to discover that purpose and that potential in Christ within us, and to live out our destiny in Christ. As we begin using our spiritual gifts and doing what God has called us to do and to be, our spiritual roots will grow deep and we will bear abundant, eternal fruit for God.

Just as some vegetables aren't able to thrive in confined containers, unable to put their roots down deep in the soil, we as Christians won't be able to flourish and be blessed without being rooted in God's word. We need to be deeply rooted and grounded in God's word each day, developing those strong roots through these six spiritual disciplines. When they are a consistent part of our lives, we will then have a healthy, beautiful, bountiful "spiritual garden" that blesses God, ourselves, and others!



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