

Weeding Lessons

As many of you know, with the Lord's abundant guidance and help, we recently purchased and moved into a new-to-us house. It has lots of flowerbeds around the house and raised beds with flowers everywhere. But, with the previous owner's spouse's passing, and her own age and infirmity, maintenance for last year plus suffered, and therefore WEEDS took over.

So, I've spent many hours over the last few weeks hoeing, chopping, pruning, raking, and bent over pulling WEEDS. It's hard but mostly mindless work, so you know me- my mind wandered to analysis, yeah, about "**weeds.**" Hopefully, some helpful information and comparisons are the result (in addition to a somewhat *tamed* landscape)...

- **Know your enemy.** That is, be able to clearly discern the difference between a "weed" and a "flower," since they often grow in the same place, and may even *look* somewhat similar to the inexperienced gardener.
- **Start with the biggest weeds first.** They're doing the most damage and robbing the most nutrients from the good plants. Besides, many of the smaller weeds will either come up with the bigger ones, or at least be easier targets once the bigger weeds are out of the way.
- **Don't bother pulling weeds from the top.** Just whacking off the top winds up making the weed stronger and tougher. So, bend over and reach all the way down into the tangled mass of vegetation- it may be difficult and produce a few scratches on you along the way (but trust me, it's worth the effort), and find the base of the weed. Then grab it firmly (growl if it helps!), and pull... and keep pulling until the whole root of the weed comes out. If it snaps off, get your hoe or shovel and dig the root of the weed out completely or it will simply start growing back as soon as you walk away!
- **Some weeds grow right next to and even intertwined with the flowers.** These are the most dangerous kind of culprit. Care must be taken to carefully untangled the weed from the flower- otherwise, simply yanking out the weed could irreparably damage or even uproot the flower also, (cf. Matt.13:24-30,36-43 parable of the *tares*).
- **You never get "finished."** Thanks to Adam (Gen.3:3:17-19), there will always be weeds with which battle must be engaged. Some of them are old and familiar foes, and you have experience with those and know just how best to uproot them. Others may be new and require different techniques, but are weeds nonetheless, and will do much harm if you fail to recognize and deal with them appropriately.
- **Be sure to water the good plants well after pulling the weeds.** With the weeds removed, a growth spurt will likely occur in your good plants since they now have been blessed with less competition for sun and nutrients. They will need water to further fuel this resurgence. Water them well.

Now (if you're still reading, "Thank-you"!), I'm no "master gardener." But having been raised on a farm by an Ag-Teacher father and a mother with a decidedly "green thumb," I've come to know a little about "weeds" and dealing with them in my lifetime. However, I've also been preaching/teaching the gospel for forty years plus now, and therefore have considerable experience dealing with the SPIRITUAL "weeds" of temptation, false doctrine, and sin. So, please reread the points above and each time you see the word "weed," mentally substitute the appropriately applicable SPIRITUAL "weed" of **"temptation," "false doctrine,"** or **"sin,"** for the *earthly* parable sprouts *heavenly/spiritual* truths! Give yourself time to really contemplate the comparisons, and let them soak in for a while. I think you'll easily see the *spiritual* side of dealing with "weeds." (Philip C. Strong; Viking Drive Church of Christ; 3791 Viking Drive, Bossier City, LA; online at vikingdrivechurchofchrist.com; email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)