

FLOURISHING UNDER THE SHEARS

John 15:1-5

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INTRO:

A. THE PURPOSE OF PRUNING

1. If your life consistently bears no fruit, God will intervene to **discipline** you.
2. If your life bears some fruit, God will intervene to **prune** you.

B. THE PHASES OF PRUNING

1. **Mortification** to intentionally remove the parts of the branches.
2. **Penetration** to ensure sunlight can get to all the branches.
3. **Concentration** to increase the size and the quality of the fruit.
4. **Generation** to encourage new fruit to develop.

C. THE PROCESS OF PRUNING

(Refer to additional handout)

D. THE PLACES OF PRUNING

1. My **money** and **possessions**. (Job 1:13-17,19)
2. The **people** I love the most. (Job 1:18-19, 22)
3. My **health** and **fitness**. (Job 2:7-10)
4. My **right** to know what God is doing. (Job 5:17-18; 10:13)
5. My sources of **significance**. (Job 12:3-5)
6. My **priority** and **plans**. (Job 42:1-2)

CONCLUSION

Additional handout (please use this as an insert in the bulletin). Please use the full half size of the A4 paper. Remember to leave the underlined words blank.

ISSUE	DISCIPLINING	PRUNING
How do you know it's happening?	<u>Pain</u>	<u>Pain</u>
Why is it happening?	I'm doing something <u>wrong</u> .	I'm doing something <u>right</u> .
What is your level of fruitfulness?	<u>No Fruit</u>	<u>Fruit</u>
What is the Gardener's desire?	<u>Gain</u> Fruit	<u>More</u> Fruit
What needs to go?	<u>Sin</u>	<u>Self</u>
Where is the focus?	<u>Outward</u>	<u>Inward</u>
How should you feel?	<u>Conviction</u>	<u>Peace</u>
What is the right response?	<u>Repentance</u> (Stop <u>sinning</u>)	<u>Trust</u> (Give God the <u>permission</u>)
When does it end?	When I stop <u>sinning</u> .	When God is <u>finished</u> .

TABLE TALK QUESTIONS

1. Read John 15:1-2. What is pruning? What gets pruned? And what is the goal of pruning?
2. Both “cutting” and “pruning” involves pain, loss and trials in our lives. But how is pruning different from discipline? [You can use the handout in the bulletin.]
3. How will knowing that God uses trials and tests to prune us and reshape our priorities change the way we respond to times of difficulty?
4. Read Job 1:13-22 and Job 42:10-17. How does the life of Job exemplify the results of pruning with God’s children?
5. Read some of areas where God will prune us. In what area in your life God is currently pruning you?
 - My **money** and **possessions**. (Job 1:13-17,19)
 - The **people** I love the most. (Job 1:18-19, 22)
 - My **health** and **fitness**. (Job 2:7-10)
 - My **right** to know what God is doing. (Job 5:17-18; 10:13)
 - The sources of my **significance**. (Job 12:3-5)
 - My **priority** and **plans**. (Job 42:1-2)
6. Are you ready to respond in this area in such a way that God can work in your life for the benefits that only He can see right now? Share your answer and then close the Life Group/family devotional discussion by praying and giving Him permission to do according to His will.