

A Branch Being Pruned

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Every branch of Christ must develop spiritually—it is allowing God to search our heart; to ask Him for spiritual wisdom; and be willing to make changes He reveals to us. God wants to develop our spiritual attitude to be like His Son Jesus. We are to place this huge task into His hands for the work to begin as soon as possible.

Change is needed because *Psalms 51:5* “*I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.*” We must grow spiritually as God prunes away what is not spiritual. *John 15:2* “*Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.*”

As we allow God to eliminate those things in our life that are not part of our spiritual life, we will be prepared to enter His kingdom. There is a big difference between our old worldly way of thinking, and the new divine way of thinking—they are completely opposite.

Most people who *say* they trust God, think that if they attend church and live a decent moral life, they will go to Heaven—but that *must* include developing spiritually to be ready for the rapture. True preparation for Christ’s return involves more than attending church and being honest. God must be allowed to do this spiritual work without delay, because a huge change in our character is needed.

The average church minister preaches his members into Heaven when they pass away, but in all too many cases, the deceased is more likely *not* in Heaven, because they did *not* allow

God to develop them *spiritually* by meeting things *scripturally*. They did not *meet* things right, because they were not *taught* right—being pruned is necessary for being ready for the rapture.

The task is a huge one, but if anyone will allow God to begin the spiritual work, they will quickly see change, and eventually there will be a revolution of thinking and acting. We become *opposite* to what we were—before God began to work in us.

It is imperative that we *know* the character and love of God, so we can begin trusting Him for everything. It is a long stretch from what we were—and it can take much time learning these lessons, but spiritual growth is the valuable result. We should want to go through anything that God sees necessary, as we have little time to *learn*, what we need to *know*, so that we can be changed into what we must *be*.

The *conditions* for entering Heaven are clearly stated—*first*, having a scriptural *attitude* about everything; *second*, to believe and follow the directions of the Bible regarding everything in life. Not many churches advise their members to get rid of their prescriptions, pills, and drugs—so they can trust God in faith for healing. But if they cannot trust God for healing, they would not be able to trust Him for salvation either.

Eternal Life depends on our attitude toward healing. Abraham became righteous when he believed God in faith. The high quality of faith that Abraham had, gives true spiritual righteousness. *Galatians 3:6* “*Abraham ‘believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.*”

No one could receive Eternal Life if they did not have the true righteousness from God. Anyone who does *not* trust God for such a small

matter as healing of their body, would not be able to trust Him for the big issue of entering Heaven either.

God’s true righteousness, Jesus said, is being scriptural with finances. *Luke 16:11* “*If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?*”—which is God’s true righteousness.

No one would be *in Heaven*, if they did not trust God *on earth*. *Luke 16:10* “*He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.*” If we are not scriptural in our finances, we are not listening to God on an important life issue, and we are not being pruned by Him.

If we have not obeyed the Scriptures in such a *minor* thing as money, we would not be given true spirituality. This may be surprising to some—and it can take a long time to learn—but we must learn it, because God has promised to show us if we will listen, and then keep trusting Him in faith.

We should ask God to search our heart, and to reveal any wrong attitude He sees in us. We need to have a repentant heart and believing mind. *Psalms 139:23-24* “*Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*”

God has promised to give all the blessings included in His sacrifice; and how to enjoy His presence. We can speed up things by a listen-up attitude—ready to meet things as His Word says. If we ask God to search our heart and attitudes, we must be ready to listen and learn. *Hebrews 4:12* “*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*”

God said there would be *few* under *His control* in the closing days, but there would be

many under Satan's control. The serious part is that Satan controls people through hidden identity. People are simply *not aware* that the devil is controlling their thoughts and attitudes. If they *did* know, they would *do* something about it.

Satan works through the mind—putting thoughts and suggestions of every kind there—without our knowing where they are from. We think the devil is not within a hundred miles of us. These thoughts seem like our own reasoning—which we often think is wise and right. Proverbs 16:25 “*There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*”

Too often we accept the devil's suggestions—leading to a harvest of trouble if there is no correcting of that mistake. It is a serious thing to have such a wicked devil and evil dictator controlling our thoughts—and *without* our knowing it. This control and influence of the devil can follow us far into the Christian life.

The gift of the Spirit, from a loving God in Heaven, enables us to see the situation as it really is. We cannot be one second without God—His presence is needed continually, because He is the only One who can teach us His Truth. His Spirit can make us what we must be—totally submissive to God, and completely conformed to the attitude of His Son.

Satan cannot attack us until he gets our consent—which he often does by making suggestions that seem like our own. If we are not aware, we can be deceived to *accept* his thoughts—that *gives* him our consent. If we feel a chill, Satan suggests we are coming down with a cold—if we *believe* that, it gives him our consent to be oppressed. We have sent him an invitation to attack us.

We *should*, instead, resist him by faith in God, and really mean it when we reject his

thoughts. We say: *In the Name of Jesus Christ, through His broken body, shed Blood, and resurrection to life, I refuse to be oppressed—God has promised it, and I accept my deliverance by faith in His divine power alone! Satan must flee!*

When we have sincerely repented; when we have given our life to God for necessary pruning; when we have made the choice to trust Him alone for everything and never turn back—*then* He can begin to teach us to recognize Satan's deceitful ways, the minute he tries to get our consent.

We will not see this, unless God opens our spiritual eyes to see it. Jeremiah 17:9 “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*” *No one* can know it, but *God* can *reveal* it—by pruning and developing us spiritually. 10 “*I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins*”—pruning and teaching us to be victorious over the devil.

The devil had Abraham love his son Isaac, *more* than he loved God. The devil is always trying to get us to love someone, or something, or anything *more* than God. Satan wants us to trust in something other than God. Abraham had to take his son, slay him, and offer him as a sacrifice to God—who alone knew that it was the *only* way the last speck of Satan's influence would be gone forever from Abraham's heart—pruning; learning; perfecting faith in God.

If Abraham would *obey* God, he would have every blessing *of* God—in this life and Eternal Life as well. Abraham had to choose, as we all do, and he could refuse to offer his son. The devil would be there to make a million excuses—*Isaac was the son of promise; God would not want you to do that; if you sacrifice Isaac, the world would not be blessed.*

If there was any of Satan's control or influence in Abraham's heart, this command to offer his son would have brought it out. God deals

with everyone in that way—if they are being pruned. Difficult things and people will be met to expose a wrong attitude in us—or to prove that there *is* no wrong attitude there. It is all for the development of our Christian character, and for that all-important preparation for Heaven.

Abraham, therefore, got ready to sacrifice his *son of promise*. It was one of the major things that took place in the Bible. It is an *example* of how God taught him, and trained him so well, that Abraham could lift a knife over a son he cherished with all of his heart—but a son that he loved *more* than he loved God—and with the full intention of slaying him.

The devil would have used every trick in the book to persuade Abraham to *not* do that, but Abraham had surrendered his life totally to God for the development of his character, so he would carry through with what God told him to do. That made Abraham an example for every human being who wants to *live by faith*. Abraham blazed the pathway here on earth—a path that leads to our eternal home in Heaven.

God is no respecter of persons; if He would teach and develop Abraham spiritually, until the last speck of Satan's influence was gone from his life, then God would do the same for anyone else—if we *want* Him to *do* that for us.

The fruits of being controlled by the Holy Spirit will always send us to God in faith for everything we want in life. Galatians 3:6 “*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*” By developing spiritually, Abraham is already in Heaven!



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