

PULPIT COMPANION

**FEED WHAT YOU
WANT TO
FLOURISH:
NURTURE WHAT
YOU WANT TO
LAST!**

MATTHEW 13:22

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This powerful message takes us deep into the agricultural metaphor of spiritual growth, reminding us that planting seeds is only the beginning of our journey toward harvest.

Drawing from 1 Corinthians 3:16 where Paul declares 'I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow,' we're challenged to understand that the difference between potential and production lies entirely in cultivation. We all possess incredible potential—fertile soil, good seeds, favorable conditions—but without intentional nurturing, nothing flourishes. The sermon walks us through three essential cultivation practices: watering with faith through prayer, Scripture, and fellowship; weeding with focus by removing the choking influences of worry, greed, and distraction; and nurturing with fortitude by maintaining steady care over time. The imagery of bamboo growing roots for five years before shooting up 80 feet reminds us that God often works beneath the surface, strengthening our foundations before revealing results.

This isn't just about spiritual growth—it applies to our relationships, careers, ministries, and personal development. Whatever we want to flourish, we must feed. Whatever we want to last, we must nurture. The call is clear: stop complaining about lack of growth and start cultivating what God has already given you.





SCRIPTURES FROM PULPIT AI

- 1 Corinthians 3:16 - "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow."
- Acts 18:24-25 - About Apollos being a learned man from Alexandria with thorough knowledge of scriptures
- Colossians 4:2 - "Devote yourselves to prayer being watchful and thankful."
- 1 Peter 2:2 - "Like newborn babies crave pure spiritual milk so that by it you may grow up in your salvation."
- Hebrews 10:24 - "Let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds."
- Matthew 13:22 - About worries of life and deceitfulness of wealth choking the word
- Mark 4:19 - "But the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desire for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful."
- 1 Peter 5:7 - "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."
- 1 Timothy 6:9 - "Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap that plunged people into ruin and destruction."
- Proverbs 4:23 - "Above all else, guard your heart for everything you do flows from it."
- 1 Timothy 6:18 - "Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds and to be generous and willing to share."
- Galatians 6:9 - "Let us not become weary in doing good. For at the proper time, we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."
- James 5:7 - "Be patient then brothers and sisters until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop."
- John 15:4 - "Remain in me as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself."
- Isaiah 30:15 - "In quietness and trust is your strength."
- Psalm 92:12 - "The righteous will flourish like a palm tree. They will grow like a cedar of Lebanon."
- Hebrews 10:36 - "You need to persevere so that when you've done the will of God, you will receive what he's promised."





DEVOTIONAL

Day 1: Water With Faith

Reading: 1 Corinthians 3:6-9; Colossians 4:2

Devotional: Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. This divine partnership reveals a profound truth: growth requires our faithful participation. Just as a farmer cannot force seeds to sprout but must consistently water them, we cannot manufacture spiritual growth, but we must cultivate it daily.

Prayer is your spiritual irrigation system, the Word is your nourishment, and fellowship provides the encouragement your soul needs. Deep roots outlast hard seasons. When doubt whispers, and circumstances challenge your faith, remember that what you water consistently will eventually flourish.

Your daily devotion may seem small, but beneath the surface, God is strengthening your roots. Don't measure growth by what you see today; trust that faithful watering produces an eternal harvest.

Reflection: What areas of your spiritual life need more consistent watering? Commit to one daily practice this week.





DEVOTIONAL

Day 2: Pull the Weeds of Worry

Reading: Matthew 13:18-23; 1 Peter 5:7

Devotional: Jesus identified three choking weeds: the worries of life, the deceitfulness of wealth, and the desire for other things. These weeds grow in the same soil as your faith, drink from the same rain, and reach for the same light—but they steal the nutrition meant for your spiritual growth. Worry drains faith like drought drains a riverbed. It feeds fear while starving trust. The more you worry, the less you worship.

Today, God invites you to cast every anxiety on Him because He genuinely cares for you. This isn't passive resignation; it's active trust. Pull the sucker of worry before it pulls you down. Pull the distraction before it detours your destiny. You cannot grow fruit if you refuse to pull the weeds. Guard your heart, set holy boundaries, and choose worship over worry.

Reflection: Name one persistent worry. Physically write it down, then pray over it and tear up the paper as an act of release.





DEVOTIONAL

Day 3: Guard Against Greed and Compromise

Reading: 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19; Proverbs 4:23

Devotional: Money whispers lies. It promises security but delivers bondage. It offers control but sells you into captivity. The deceitfulness of wealth isn't about having resources—it's about resources having you. When the desire for more takes the place of God, you've planted a weed that will choke out every blessing. Greed grows quietly but kills quickly. Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

God commands us to be rich in good deeds, generous and willing to share. This goes against our consuming culture, but it aligns with kingdom cultivation. Pull the need to compromise before it poisons your calling. Pull the greed before it grips your soul. Choose contentment with godliness, which is great gain, and watch how God multiplies what you release.

Reflection: Identify one area where material desire competes with spiritual devotion. What one act of generosity can you practice this week?





DEVOTIONAL

Day 4: Nurture With Fortitude

Reading: Galatians 6:9; Hebrews 10:35-36

Devotional: Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Nurturing is the holy discipline of steady care over time. Like the bamboo farmer who waters daily for five years before seeing the shoot burst 80 feet high, God strengthens roots before revealing results. You may not see change yet, but don't quit nurturing. God is growing something beneath the surface. His harvest schedule runs on divine timing, not convenience.

You cannot rush God's kairos moment. Perseverance feeds growth. Faithfulness fertilizes fruit. The righteous flourish like palm trees—bending in storms but never breaking. They grow like cedars—struck by lightning yet still standing. Your resilience is being cultivated in the waiting. Keep watering. Keep weeding. Keep trusting. The harvest is coming.

Reflection: What situation requires patient endurance right now? How can you continue nurturing it while trusting God's timing?





DEVOTIONAL

Day 5: Feed What You Want to Flourish

Reading: John 15:1-8; Philippians 1:6

Devotional: Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself. This is the ultimate cultivation principle: connection determines production. What you feed will flourish. What you nurture will last. Jesus is the true vine, and detachment breeds drought. Feed on the Word daily. Encourage one another regularly. Rest in God intentionally. The Sabbath isn't laziness; it's trust. You work six days, but the seventh belongs to God—whatever comes or goes happens without your striving.

God is confident that He who began a good work in you will complete it. Your calling isn't to manufacture growth but to cultivate it by staying connected to Christ. Water with faith. Weed with focus. Nurture with fortitude. Then watch as God releases supernatural increase in every area you've faithfully tended.

Reflection: What relationship, dream, or calling needs more intentional nurturing? Create a practical weekly plan to feed it.





SMALL GROUP GUIDE : "Feed What You Want to Flourish"

Opening Prayer:

Begin by asking God to reveal areas in your lives that need cultivation and give you wisdom to identify and remove the "weeds" that are choking your growth.

Key Scripture:

1 Corinthians 3:6-7; Matthew 13:22; Galatians 6:9

Key Sermon Points

1 Water with Faith - If you don't water it, it won't grow

- Growth requires daily watering through prayer, God's Word, and fellowship
- Deep roots outlast hard seasons
- The difference between potential and production is cultivation

2. Weed with Focus - Don't let weeds outgrow your growth

- Three choking weeds: worries of life, deceitfulness of wealth, desire for more
- "Suckers" drain the nutrition meant for your growth
- Above ground may look green, but underground weeds are choking you

3. Nurture with Fortitude - Feed what you want to flourish

- Nurturing is steady care over time
- God grows roots before He reveals fruit
- Perseverance feeds growth; don't quit before harvest





SMALL GROUP GUIDE :

"Feed What You Want to Flourish"

Discussion Questions:

- The pastor said, "The difference between potential and production is how you cultivate what God has already given you." What does this statement mean to you personally? Where do you see untapped potential in your life?
- Three ways to water were mentioned: prayer, God's Word, and fellowship. Which of these three do you find easiest? Which is most challenging? Why?
- The sermon identified three specific "weeds": worries of life, deceitfulness of wealth, and desire for more. Which of these weeds do you struggle with most? How have you seen it affect your spiritual growth?
- The pastor shared the story of the bamboo farmer who watered for five years before seeing growth above ground. Have you ever experienced a season where God was working "beneath the surface" in your life? How did you maintain faith during that time?
- "Pull the suckers" was a strong theme in the message. What are the "suckers" in your life right now—things or people that are draining your spiritual energy and preventing growth? (Be honest but respectful.)
- The pastor said, "You can't worship when you're worried." How have you seen worry interfere with your relationship with God? What practical steps can you take this week to "cast your anxiety on Him"?
- Looking at the three cultivation principles (water, weed, nurture), which one does your spiritual life need most right now? What would it look like to focus on that area this week?
- The sermon emphasized that fellowship helps us see weeds we might miss on our own. How comfortable are you with allowing others to speak into your life? What would help you be more open to accountability?





Practical Applications:

This Week's Challenge: Choose ONE action from each category

WATER (Choose one):

- ☐ Start a daily Bible reading plan (even 5 minutes)
- ☐ Set three specific prayer times each day
- ☐ Commit to attending a weekly fellowship gathering
- ☐ Reach out to encourage someone who is struggling

WEED (Choose one):

- ☐ Identify one "sucker" (person, habit, or thought pattern) that's draining you and create boundaries
- ☐ Do a "worry audit"—write down your worries and pray through each one, surrendering them to God
- ☐ Examine your relationship with money/possessions and confess any areas where it's become an idol
- ☐ Limit social media or news consumption that feeds anxiety

NURTURE (Choose one):

- ☐ Practice Sabbath rest this week—one full day trusting God without work
- ☐ Journal about where God might be growing "roots" in you right now
- ☐ Ask a trusted friend to help you identify blind spots in your spiritual growth
- ☐ Memorize one verse about perseverance (like Galatians 6:9)





GROUP ACTIVITY

Partner up (groups of 2-3):

- Share which specific action you're committing to this week
- Exchange contact information
- Agree to check in with each other mid-week about your progress
- Pray for each other specifically about the "weeds" and "suckers" you're facing

Closing Reflection

Read together: Philippians 1:6 "Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Reflection: God is the one who gives the growth, but He invites us to participate in the cultivation process. What you cultivate will grow. The question is: what are you cultivating?

Closing Prayer

Pray as a group:

- Thank God for the seeds He's planted in each person
- Ask for strength to pull the weeds and suckers
- Request perseverance during the "underground" seasons
- Commit to faithful cultivation until harvest comes





Before Next Week

- Follow through on your chosen action items
- Connect with your accountability partner
- Come prepared to share one testimony of how you "watered," "weeded," or "nurtured" your spiritual growth

Leader Notes

Be Sensitive To:

- Some group members may be dealing with difficult relationships ("suckers") that are family members—encourage healthy boundaries without judgment
- Financial struggles or wealth may be sensitive topics—create a safe space for honesty
- Mental health issues related to worry and anxiety—remind the group that seeking professional help is also part of faithful stewardship

Encourage:

- Vulnerability and honesty about struggles
- Celebration of small steps of growth
- Grace for those in "underground" seasons where growth isn't visible yet

