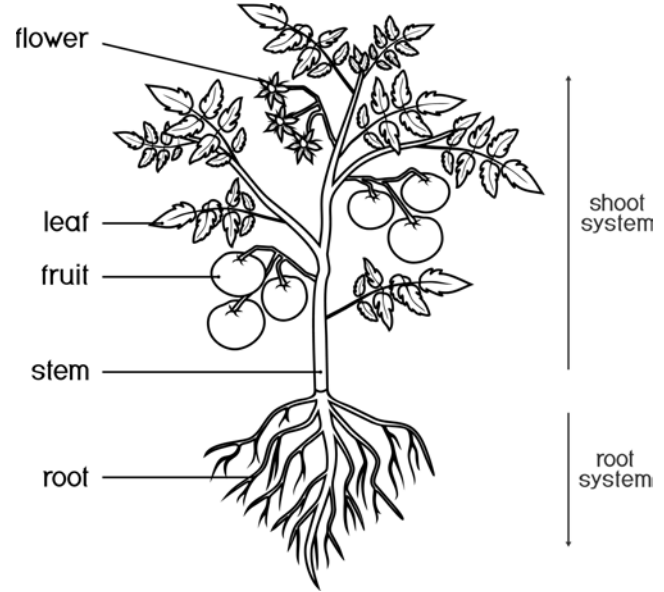
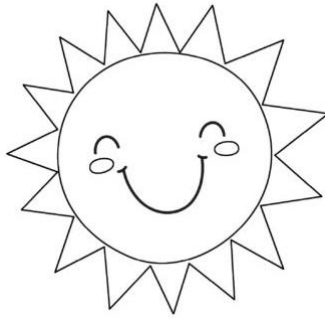


# Let's All Root for ROOTS!



## What is a metaphor?

A metaphor is a way to imagine how one thing is the same as another thing because they have the same characteristics.



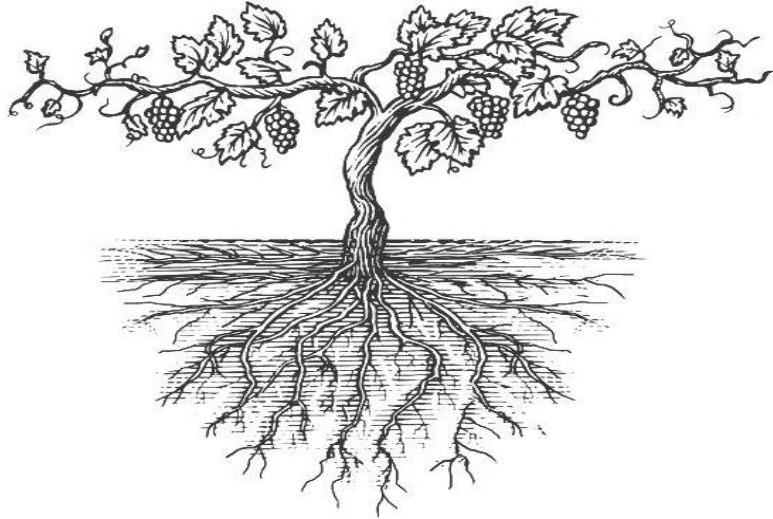
Let's look at the metaphor, "You are my sunshine." Maybe a loved one has said that to you before. Just like the sun brings warmth and happiness to someone's day, you do the same by bringing happiness to your loved one's day. You are "sunshine" because you share the characteristic of helping someone feel warm and happy.

In the Bible, G-d uses roots as a metaphor to show stability, strength, and nourishment.



G-d also uses roots as a metaphor to symbolize our spiritual foundation and connection with Him. Just as a plant's roots draw life-giving nutrients up to nourish its branches and fruit, G-d wants us to be deeply rooted in our knowledge of His Word and in our faith in Him!

G-d uses roots, branches, and fruit as metaphors to teach us lessons on why we need to study His Word to be deeply knowledgeable or "rooted" in our beliefs so that we will have the safety and security that only G-d can provide for us. This will help us want to be obedient to His Word by "bearing good fruit." We do this by being kind and serving others in the way Yeshua would. We will enjoy fellowship and unity with other like-minded believers or "branches" that also "bear good fruit" right along with us as we continue to grow in faith in the L-rd!



## **Strengthen your "roots" right now with these verses:**

### **Colossians 2: 6-7**

**Therefore, as you received Messiah Yeshua as L-rd, so continue to walk in Him--rooted and built up in Him and established in your faith just as you were taught, overflowing with thankfulness.**

In this verse, G-d tells us to stay ROOTED in our faith in Yeshua, and to GROW in it continually!

### **Jeremiah 17:7-8**

**Blessed is the one who trusts in Ad-nai, whose confidence is in Ad-nai. For he will be like a tree planted by the waters, spreading out its roots by a stream. It has no fear when heat comes, but its leaves will be green. It does not worry in a year of drought, nor depart from yielding fruit.**

When we learn and know G-d's Word (making strong roots), we will feel safe and secure when troubles or challenges come, such as when we might not want to tell the truth if we accidentally broke someone's toy, or if we don't want to obey our parents. When our "roots" are planted in G-d's Word, we will not be destroyed by life's difficulties! Instead, we will remain strong and fruitful just like the tree planted by the water's edge!

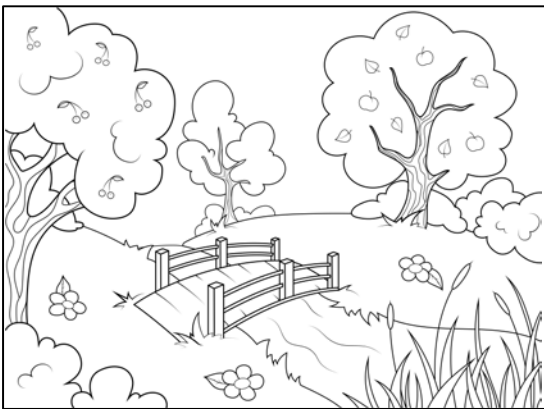
# What is a parable?

Yeshua liked to tell stories called parables. Parables are like metaphors, except instead of just a single word or phrase, it's an entire story that helps you imagine how things have similar characteristics. We can read one of His parables here:

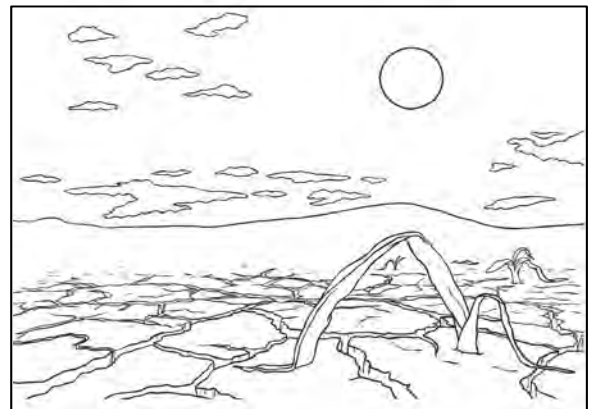
## Matthew 13:3-8

**Yeshua told them many things in parables, saying, “Behold, a sower went out to spread some seed. As he was scattering the seed, some seeds fell by the road; and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they didn’t have much soil. They sprang up immediately, because the soil wasn’t deep. But when the sun came up, they were scorched; and because they had no roots, they withered away. Other seeds fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew and choked them out. But others fell on good soil and were producing fruit. They yielded a crop—some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”**

These verses are a warning against being shallow and weak in our faith. We should study and learn G-d's Word **EVERY DAY**. Just as plants without deep roots struggle when faced with the scorching sun, those who have not learned G-d's Word and have not developed a strong foundation in Yeshua will struggle when they encounter troubles and difficulties!



←THIS - or - THIS →



Do you want to be strong, or, do you want to be weak when you encounter trouble? Yes, we want to be **STRONG** like a tree planted by the water's edge!

In the last couple months, we have been reading in Exodus about how G-d pulled the Israelites out of Egypt, prepared the land of Israel for them, and then "planted" them into Israel. These verses in Psalm 80 remind us of what the L-ord did:

**Psalm 80:8-12**

**Elohei-Tzva'ot, restore us, and make Your face shine, and we will be saved. You pulled out a vine from Egypt. You drove out nations and planted it. You cleared a place for it, and it took deep root and filled the land. The mountains were covered by its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches. It sent out its branches to the sea, and its shoots to the river.**

These verses use metaphors again. G-d took a "vine" (the Israelites) out of Egypt, and then prepared the promised land for them by clearing out other nations from Israel. Then, He "planted the vine" there and it took "DEEP ROOT" and "filled the land" and sent its "branches and roots" to the river and to the sea!

These verses are part of a prayer asking G-d to restore us and make His face shine on us, so that we may be saved, just like the Israelites were. G-d wants us to form DEEP ROOTS and fill the places He has planted us in. He also wants us to help others "grow branches" and "bear fruit" for HIM!!



**Matthew 13:23**

**"Now the one sown on the good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands. He indeed bears fruit, yielding a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty times what was sown."**

This verse above is another parable that Yeshua told. It means that we are to be like seeds that have been planted in good soil and learn G-d's Word so that we will become "fruitful," receiving blessings and being a blessing to others.

# Let's plant seeds in good soil that will grow strong roots, vining branches, and lots of fruit!

In the same way that **we** need strong roots to bear good fruit, our tomato plants need strong roots to bear good tomatoes!

The tomato plants we have today in the United States are not the same as the original wild tomatoes found long ago in the Andes Mountains of South America. The tomato plants we have now look very, very different! The new tomatoes grow as a result of tomato breeders selecting the tastiest, biggest tomatoes to harvest seeds from, and they have bred out the traits that allowed their wild ancestors to thrive in the harsh environment of the Andes.

Wild tomatoes are creeping vines that grow along the ground. They can get really long! Wherever the vines touch good soil, roots will grow from the stem to anchor the plant more firmly to the ground and provide another place for the plant to get more water and nutrients from the soil. This is just like us! Every time we have contact with G-d's Word, it creates more "roots" for us to become nourished and stronger in our faith!



**Wild Tomatoes**



**Cultivated Tomatoes**

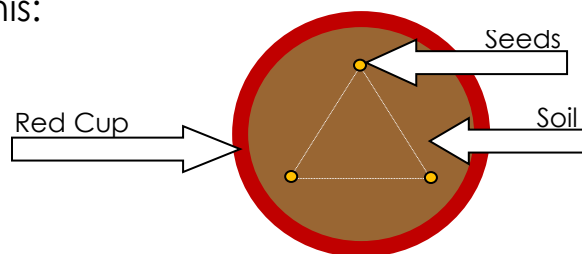
Our new cultivated tomatoes require lots of pampering with proper water, sun, and nutrients to form strong roots and branches that will provide lots of good fruits. We cannot allow our new tomatoes to grow along the ground like wild tomatoes because the branches, leaves, and tomatoes need to be kept nice and dry.

We can help our tomatoes grow a stronger root system by using the secrets the wild tomatoes used to grow roots. Read on to learn how!



# How To Plant Seeds

1. First, write your name on your red cup with a Sharpie permanent marker (other markers will come off on your hand or clothes).
2. Plant the seed into the food-safe cup that has a hole at the bottom so the good soil doesn't stay too wet. Fill the cup about 3/4 full (to the bottom line inside your cup) of soil that is damp, but not dripping wet. Pack it down just so that there are no air holes in the soil, but not so hard that the roots will struggle to grow in it.
3. Place your 3 seeds on the top of the soil in your cup spaced apart in a triangle shape like this:



4. Next, using a spoon, add a thin layer of soil that is dripping wet on top of the seeds, just to the top line in your cup. The water in the "drippy soil" will help your seeds sprout.
5. When finished, dry the outside of your cup really well with paper towel.
6. Cover your cup with a square of plastic wrap to avoid spilling the contents and secure with a rubber band. Do not let the cup tip over, or your soil will spill and your seeds may not grow.
7. Do not remove the piece of tape on the bottom of your cup until you get home to avoid any soil spilling in the synagogue or in the car on your way home!



## At Home:

When you get home, remove the tape from the bottom of the cup and place the cup on a small plate or disposable food-safe container. Place this in a very warm area in your home. Leave the plastic wrap in place on the top of the container until you see a little green seedling starting to grow up above the dirt.

Once the seed starts to grow above the soil, it is called a seedling. If all 3 seeds sprout, you may end up with 3 seedlings in your cup! You can either try to scoop the 2 extra seedlings into new cups of good soil, or, you can just pull them out and throw them away. No matter what you choose to do, you really should only have one seedling in your cup.

Your seedling will need lots of very bright light for 14-16 hours each day. Place your seedling cup under a very bright grow light, fluorescent light, or LED light. The closer the light is to the top of your plant, the better, just don't let it touch the plant or your plant can burn. Be sure to turn the light off for at least 8 hours per day. Raise the light as your plant grows to prevent it from touching your plant.

Water the soil when the soil seems to begin to dry. Do not let the soil become completely dry. Check the soil every day. Do not let the leaves get wet when you add water or your plant may develop a disease and die.



Let your seedling grow until it is at least 12-14 inches tall before you plant it into the ground. Once it is tall enough, you can gradually set it outside during the day in the shade to get it used to real sunlight for a few days. Then, slowly put it into the sun for an hour or so, gradually increasing the time in the sun each day for a week until it is ready for planting.

When you are ready to plant, you are going to copy the secrets of the original tomatoes to get your plant to grow stronger roots by either planting the plant very deeply, or, by planting it on its side so that the roots will grow deep and strong!



Look at this stem of a tomato seedling. Do you see the tiny bumps on the plant's stem? These are the special cells that begin to form new roots. They just need to be covered in damp soil, and they will pop out of the stem and grow into the soil. When the roots begin to grow, they can look a little weird, like tiny cream-colored worms coming out of the stem!

Again, today we grow tomatoes up off the ground to prevent diseases that can occur when the plants or the tomatoes touch the wet ground. To imitate the strong and massive roots of the wild tomatoes, we must plant our seedlings deeper into the ground so the new roots will grow off the stem, giving our plants great strength and lots of nutrients to produce lots and lots of big fruits.

Before we can plant the seedling deeper, we need to know which type of tomato we are planting. The plant on the left is called a "Determinate" or bush tomato, and the one on the right is called an "Indeterminate" or vining tomato.



**Bush Tomato Plant  
"Determinate"**



**Vining Tomato Plant  
"Indeterminate"**



## Bush Tomatoes

Bush tomatoes have been bred to grow from one strong stem in the center, and tend to be shorter plants with fuller branches. Sometimes the branches need to be supported by a cage that goes around the plant because the fruit may be too heavy for the branch, causing it to break. All the tomatoes on a bush tomato usually ripen at the same time, then the plant stops producing tomatoes.

Because the stem of these plants grows straight up like a tree trunk, we need to dig a hole 10-12 inches deep. Place your plant in the hole so that the top 3 leaf branches will be above the soil once you fill in the hole with soil around your plant. Water the soil very well so that new roots will begin to grow.



## Vining Tomatoes

Vining tomatoes are most like their wild relatives in that they grow like crazy, producing along the vine until they get too cold and then they stop growing. The vines need to be supported and tied to a strong rope, fence, or cage support.



Because these plants are flexible vines, we can dig a shallow "trench" sideways to plant it in. Dig a trench about 10 inches long, and 6-8 inches deep. You can also dig a deep hole for vining tomatoes (like you would a bush tomato) if that works better for your gardening space.

# Removing the Plant from the Cup

Place your fingers around the top of the cup with the stem of the plant in between your fingers. Flip the entire cup and plant upside down on your hand, and push your finger from your other hand through the bottom hole to pop the soil out of the cup. Be sure to not break up the block of soil and roots, or you might damage the plant. Remove the cup and set it aside. You can wash the cup later with soap and water and use it again.

Place the plant in the hole so that only the top two or three sets of leaves are going to be above the soil after you cover the plant with the dirt you removed from the hole. It's okay to leave the other lower branches on the plant to be buried. Roots will grow from these branches, too! Once you fill in the soil around the plant, water it very well with a slow spray, but avoid getting the leaves wet that are sticking out of the ground or the plant may get sick and have trouble growing. Tomato plants do not like to get their leaves wet.

Next, gently tie the base of the stem to a stake, fence, or other support to encourage the stem to grow upward. If you are using a stake or a cage, be sure you do not stab it into the plant underground, or it may die.

Be sure to water your tomato plant every day for the first week to encourage strong roots to grow deeply into the soil. Again, do not get the leaves wet, just the soil. Once you notice the plant growing vigorously above ground again, it is well established and you will only need to water deeply but less frequently.

**Please see the links below for more information about nurturing your roots with G-d's Word, and more information about nurturing your tomato plant's roots with G-d's provisions:**

All verses quoted are from the Tree of Life Bible.

To read more of G-d's Word online for free, ask a parent to go to:

**[biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?quicksearch=roots&version=TLV](http://biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?quicksearch=roots&version=TLV)**

For more information about planting tomatoes, ask a parent to go to:

**[ruralsprout.com/sideways-tomatoes/](http://ruralsprout.com/sideways-tomatoes/)**

For more info about fertilizing your tomatoes, ask a parent to go to:

**[ruralsprout.com/tomato-fertilizer-guide/](http://ruralsprout.com/tomato-fertilizer-guide/)**

For more info about pruning your tomatoes, ask a parent to go to:

**[ruralsprout.com/tomato-suckers/](http://ruralsprout.com/tomato-suckers/)**