

When Your Way Isn't Working Session 4: The Purpose of Pruning

(Pages 63-68) John 15:1-2

Connect

To get things started, discuss one of the following questions as a group:

- What is something that spoke to your heart in last week's personal study that you would like to share with the group?
- When has something painful in your life turned out for good?

Read and Watch

Read **John 15:1-2** as a group

If you haven't already, watch the video for this session (Session 4: The Purpose of Pruning). As you watch, take notes on statements and concepts that stand out to you.

Discuss

Now discuss what you just watched by answering the following questions.

1. Someone read Romans 8:29 aloud. When God prunes us, he has a picture in mind of what he is shaping us to be. According to this verse, what is the picture? How does this shed light on what kind of fruit God wants to see in us?
2. How does it encourage you to know that God does not cut off a branch that doesn't bear fruit but instead picks it up so that it will be healthy again?
3. Consider these statements from the teaching: "Really, the question becomes, do you trust the picture? Do you trust the Gardener, who has the shears, that he's going to make it beautiful, that he's going to make it grow, that it's going to be better when he's done with it than it was before he started?" How would you answer each of these questions?
4. What are different kinds of branches God prunes in our lives? What is one particular "sucker branch" that he may want to cut off in your life?
5. Someone read 1 Peter 5:6 aloud. Why is it important for us to submit ourselves to God's pruning process? What is the promise when we humble ourselves before God?

Respond

It hurts to have things cut off in our lives, especially when those things seem good and healthy to us. But God is after something better for us: he wants to shape us into the image of Jesus, his Son. We can trust the Gardener because he is working to make us as fruitful as possible. So take a few minutes on your own as you close this session to think about anything that God may want to prune from your life, and then answer the questions below.

- What spoke most to your heart from the video teaching and the Scripture reading?

- What is God stirring you to do as a result?

- How will this strengthen your connection to Jesus?

Pray

End your time by praying together as a group. As you pray, ask God to make you open to the pruning that he wants to do in your life and to help you trust him in the process. Ask if anyone has prayer requests, and write those requests in the space below so you and your group members can continue to pray about them in the week ahead.
