

LIFESAVERS

A L.I.F.E. Group of the church of Christ at Tusculum
Living In Fellowship Everyday

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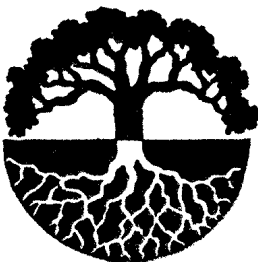
“Pruning the Oak” September 13, 2009

Why prune?

Pruning improves tree health and strength. Pruning for health involves removing diseased or insect-infested wood. Typically it involves thinning the crown to increase airflow and reduce pest problems, and removing crossing or rubbing branches. Pruning encourages trees to develop a strong structure and reduces the likelihood of damage during severe weather. All of these actions encourage growth of the main trunk.

As we are pruned in our spiritual lives, we must “seek those things which are above” (Colossians 3:1). Paul instructs us, “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Colossians 3:5). These attitudes and actions are things that “rub” against God’s ways, much like the branches in trees.

Our pruning must be extensive for us to grow in God’s character. Just a few verses down Paul says, “You yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him” (Colossians 3:8-10). God’s pruning process uses the circumstances in our lives to help us grow in His character and appearance.



1. When you see a huge old beautiful tree what do you not see?
2. What can you assume has happened in a person’s life when you find out he or she is a strong person?
3. Read [James 1:2-5](#) and discuss how your typical first reaction has been to trials.
4. Based on [2 Corinthians 1:3-4](#) what does the worst thing that has ever happened in your life prepare you to do?
5. What do you think Steve meant when he said, “Church work is messy?”

**“Most of the shadows of this life are caused by our standing in our own sunshine.”
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson**

