

Garden of the Heart Ministries

Bearing Fruit

When you are praying for your wayward loved ones there is one element you can add that will make your prayers more effective. Can you guess what it is? I learned this lesson through a gift that was given to me by a friend, Kathy.

She found out that I never had a rosebush in my garden so she gave me a wild rose bush. Upon handing it to me she said, "Take this bush home and plant it and water it daily. But whatever you do, don't pick any of the blooms this summer."

Once home I grabbed my shovel and dug a hole, carefully planting the wild rose bush. Faithfully, I watered it, but its promising pink buds withered and its green thorny stalks turned brown and brittle. The wild bush appeared to be doing its own thing--dying!

Every morning I looked for life, but found none. Kathy's words rang in my ears: "For the first year don't try helping the plant by picking the blooms, even if they appear dead, or you'll bring about its demise."

I waited. The plant appeared dead and there was no visible sign of life. I contemplated whether I should uproot the unsightly plant.

A month later I took a stroll in my garden and noticed that the rose bush had sprouted new green stems and foliage as if they were engrafted in. The wild bush wasn't dead after all!

Puzzled, I asked Kathy why the perishing bush suddenly came back to life. Her response surprised me.

"If you pick dead buds or stems when the bush is first planted, all the nutrients will be used to replace lost buds. But if you leave the dead buds alone, life will shoot downward supplying all it needs to root firmly in the soil. Unless properly rooted it will wither and die."

So it is in the heart of the wayward. Once your prayer is planted, don't try fixing their wild, unruly ways by picking at apparent dead things in their life. If you do, they'll use all their strength bearing fruit in their own efforts instead of rooting deeply in Christ. The result will be a fruitless, man-pleasing person. With roots shallow and unstable, their spiritual life will dry up.

Don't determine growth only by outward appearances, look at the heart. Even though there may be no visible progress, you can be certain that God is working deep within their heart. If you are patient and do not give up, you will soon see newness of life bursting forth. Remember, picking buds prematurely stunts growth.

When you start to see the signs of life coming from your wayward loved ones, don't try to help them along by picking at all the things that still need to change. Rather continue to pray for them and love them. There is power in God's love reaching forth through your life that will open and melt the hardest of hearts.

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Do you want to win them to Christ? Then love them unconditionally. But how do you do that when they have hurt you so badly?

It's through the love of God which has been shed abroad in your heart through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5).

All things in the Christian realm are released by faith. No matter what has happened in your relationships with your wayward loved ones, you can love them by faith. As you walk in love in obedience to God, He will meet there, for God is love (1John 4:16).

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