

THINGS CUT OFF, THINGS CUT BACK

From the Pen of Lady Joyce M. Jones

"So [you] will produce even more." John 15:2 NLT

Jesus said the vine dresser 'cuts off every branch....that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes [cuts back] the branches that do bear fruit so they....produce even more." Notice two things:

- (1) **GOD CUTS SOME THINGS OFF.** "What kind of things?" Things you're comfortable with but that stand in the way of your progress. Things He hasn't chosen for you. Things that will bring you trouble. Things that refuse to change. Things that have served their purpose.
- (2) **GOD CUTS SOME THINGS BACK.** A fruit tree that's just been pruned certainly doesn't look its best. And when God starts cutting back certain things in your life in order to redirect your energies, for a while you may not look so good either. Sometimes this means letting go of things you thought would always be there, or reprioritizing your life, or making do with less for a while, or not being able to explain to your loved ones why you're going through the pruning process.

But life-giving sap flowing into a barren branch with no potential for fruitfulness is a waste! And so is time, attention, and energy taken from first things and given to second and third things. Understand this: God knows what needs to be cut OFF in your life, and He knows what needs to be cut BACK. And although you may not understand what he's doing pray: "Send whoever You will and take away whoever You will. I'll praise You when they come and I'll praise You when they go, because Your approval is my reward and Your purpose is my reason to live."

This lesson taken from the book entitled The Word For You Today.

My Thoughts:

If you are like me, one of my first "thoughts" was this particular lesson is directed to only those that really want to GROW in the things of God.

If our desire is to GROW in God, and to be in His **PERFECT WILL**, it **WILL COST** you and I. Years ago....many years ago, there was a well-known song sung by Rev James Cleveland. The title of the song was "TO BE USED BY GOD." We were the "young folks" when that song first came out. Oh, how wonderful were those words and the melody has not been forgotten,,,,,but, many of us did not understand the COST to be used by God.

For each one of us there will come TIMES for us to be pruned. Pruning is not a one-time event or happening. God is not angry with us because of what's happening. No, HE is getting us ready to be of more service, and He realizes far more than we do, that HE cannot use us with a lot of heavy and even some dead branches yet hanging off of us. In many of our churches we had or yet have "testimony service." I remember listening to them and one thing that they did was express times of "going through." But before one would take their seat they would ask the saints to "PRAY FOR ME THAT I ENDURE." What we now know is that person or persons were being PRUNED.

Just like in the natural a tree or a plant has to undergo a cutting away, so also in our spiritual life. Once we accept Jesus into our lives, we then should become **FRUITFUL**. Yes, it's a process; it doesn't happen overnight, but if you want to be USED by God, then buckle up because pruning times will come.

Some time ago I mention in a lesson about a lovely, and beautiful crab apple tree that we had. It was simply beautiful and it was because of that tree that I fell in love with the property. It bore the most gorgeous flowers in the early spring, and when the flowers would fall to the ground they would coat the green grass. What an awesome sight. But after a few years we began to notice that the tree wasn't producing as much and even the leaves started to fall much too early. My husband told me that he was going to prune it. I just thought that he was only going to cut a few branches and then be finished. I came home one day after work and my poor tree looked like it could have starred in an Alfred Hitchcock movie. I was truly upset but he assured me that he hadn't killed my tree, but that what he had done was very necessary. The next spring it STARTED to look better, but it took another spring for the harvest to come forth. Likewise for each one of us. God is the MASTER PRUNER. He understands the need to SEPARATE, CLEAR OUT, CUT OFF, AND BURN AWAY things in our lives. The question is, are you willing to GO THROUGH THE PROCESS?

There is a cost, dear ones.