




SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Roots & Fruits

For more than 2000 years, God has been using an amazing plan to grow his kingdom—to spread his message to every part of the world and from one generation to the next and to the next and to the next. The plan is amazing because God invites us to be part of it, everyday people sharing our story with others.

It began with Jesus calling out to a few ordinary fishermen near their boats, “Come! Follow me! I will make you fishers of men!” They followed. They watched. They asked questions. They learned of the Father’s love for his children. They observed this new kind of love—God’s love—love that gave everything. Love that died, was buried, and raised back to life. Sacrificial love that gave life to all who believed. And, they believed. God invited them to be a part of his plan.



Listen to Paul speak of being part of God’s plan (1 Corinthians 3:6-9 NIRV), “I planted the seed. Apollos watered it. But God has been making it grow. So the one who plants is not important. The one who waters is not important. It is God who makes things grow. He is the important one. The one who plants and the one who waters have the same purpose. The Lord will give each of them a reward for their work. We work together to serve God.”

How interesting that God has been using his people for 2000 years to spread his good news, yet people are not necessary. God could do this without us. He doesn’t need us. He invites us into his plan because he loves us. He does it so we can see him work, know him more, notice his power, rejoice in what he does, and give him glory. Through our participation with him, our faith grows.

The first followers were like trees putting roots into the soil. As they followed Jesus—watching, listening, learning, loving—their roots sprouted, then grew deep. After Jesus went to heaven, God sent his Spirit, who helped them mature and grow strong. As these followers died to having their own way and let the Spirit lead them, something amazing happened that only God could do. They began to produce fruit! Fruit of the Spirit. Fruit that is full of God’s goodness and feeds others. Fruit with beautiful seeds of faith hidden inside. Seeds, that when God breathes Life into them, spread the Good News to others. And so, this has gone on for 2000 years, all through the centuries, to you and to me. How grateful we can be!

Out of deep gratitude to God, we have the privilege to extend God’s kingdom to others. In today’s spiritual practice we will look at our Roots and our Fruits with gratitude and humility.

Using the illustration of the tree, look at the ROOTS. Consider:

Who are the PEOPLE in your life who have been instrumental in planting seeds of faith in you? In what ways have they done that?

Draw more roots on your tree, adding these names and a brief description of how God uniquely used each person to help grow your faith.

Retrace your story with your family or a friend. Remember how God has used these people and what he has done in and for you. Maybe there was a person or pivotal experience that was particularly meaningful. Share it. You may wish to write Thank You notes to those who were impactful.

Encourage others to share the story of the roots of their tree.

What are some PRACTICES that have helped you grow strong roots? (examples: prayer, scripture reading and study, worship, gratitude, thoughtful talks with God, journaling)

Draw these roots and label them. Be creative about which roots are strong and sturdy and which might be new and less developed.

Share with one another what has been valuable and why? Is there a specific practice that draws you especially close to God? Describe how it is influencing you.

Now let's look at FRUITS. Consider:

Think of times when you showed kindness, compassion, or generosity. Did this seem to happen naturally, as an outflow of God's love in you? Or, did it seem to be out of your own effort, something you should do? How might experiencing Jesus' love through the Holy Spirit make this more natural? Describe a time you experienced this, if you think of one.

Who are people you want to see connected to Jesus?

Add fruit to your tree, writing the name of each person on a piece of fruit. Pray that God's Spirit will produce fruit in you, fruit filled with His seeds of love, that might help others see Jesus in you and find faith in him.

Share your picture and your experiences with others. Listen as they share theirs.

Say a prayer, offering yourself to God to be a part of his plan. Let him know that you are his servant, happy to plant seeds or water. Ask him to make the seeds of faith grow in each person you have named.

Celebrate God's goodness and generosity—to send Jesus to be the Way to belong in God's Kingdom. And celebrate God's plan to extend his Kingdom to you and invite you to join him in extending his Kingdom to others. Celebrate being part of his amazing story!

