

# The Pruned Life

THE TREE AND THE VINE · JOHN 15:2, 6; PSALM 1:4 · MARCH 10, 2024 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

*"He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful." (John 15:2)*

## Pruning as Cleansing for Fruitfulness

The word means cut "clean" and implies healing

Jesus' word is the pruning tool that cuts clean

What about the branches that don't bear fruit?

Pruning's purpose is to bring greater life and fruitfulness

## Three Types of Pruning

Pruning related to sin

Pruning related to service

Pruning related to circumstances

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your favorite flower, plant, or tree? Why?
2. This week we continue our Lenten preaching series, "The Tree and the Vine," based in the Psalm 1 and John 15. Whether you are on your own or with others, begin your study

in prayer, asking God to speak to you, and then read John 15:1-17 aloud.

3. Today we're going to focus on Jesus' words in verse 2 related to pruning. Read that verse aloud again. Why does Jesus say God brings pruning into our lives?
4. The verb used for "prune" has the literal sense of cutting something cleanly, deriving from a root word which means "clean" or "pure." How might this add to our sense of the meaning of the pruning Jesus describes here?
5. When have you experienced pruning in your own life with God? What happened?
6. Is there any sense you have now of needing God's pruning in your life?
7. One concern with this passage is whether there is a way to "lose one's salvation" based on what we read about cutting off branches (vs 2) and branches thrown into the fire (vs 6). What do you think Jesus is really trying to address in these verses within the metaphor of the vine and the branches?
8. Now return to Psalm 1 and read it aloud. In this psalm's description of two different ways of living, what would you say makes the difference in the two ways? More specifically, what does God do and what do we do?
9. What is God speaking to you through this study? If you are with a small group, discuss that with one another and then pray about what you shared. If you are on your own, write it down, pray about it, and share this with someone during the next few days.

## DIG DEEPER

This week dig deeper in one or more of the following ways:

- Memorize John 15:1-2 or 15:9
- Continue with the Eastbrook Church Lenten devotional: [eastbrook.org/devotionals](http://eastbrook.org/devotionals).
- Take some time to meditate on John 15:1-4. Perhaps you might want to draw, paint, letter, or sketch aspects of these verses to help you. Perhaps you might want to write your own prayer back to God as part of your reflection. Share this with a friend.
- Explore some of the following resources:
  - Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God*
  - Andrew Murray, *The True Vine*
  - "I Am the Vine" – John Michael Talbot: [youtube.com/watch?v=B2S2XSvDpkE](https://youtube.com/watch?v=B2S2XSvDpkE)
  - Abide" – Aaron Williams: [youtube.com/watch?v=BA-Wi4fdcVE](https://youtube.com/watch?v=BA-Wi4fdcVE)