

**MCD Just Checking In #38 New Growth Pilgrim's Process**  
**Psalm 39:12 "Hear my prayer, O Lord... for I am a "pilgrim" with You..."**

*Jn 15:1-5 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 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. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*

I'm just an old farmer. Those of you who know me have probably heard me make reference to the fact that I was born and raised on a farm that went back 5 generations, to the mid 1800s. And it's still in my blood. Even though today we own less than a quarter acre, the neighbors call me the produce neighbor! Every one of them has already asked me how my garden is doing! Many have already tasted a share of the 55 quarts of strawberries (so far!)! The rhubarb is healthy; the pumpkin and cucumber vines are strong; the zucchini and broccoli look good, and the strawberries are astoundingly fruitful.

I was mowing the lawn the other day and checking out the raspberries, my favorites! Last fall I cut them back severely as I always do. And the thought struck me as I looked them over, hmmm. FRUIT IS ONLY FOUND ON NEW GROWTH.

That thought has occupied my thinking for quite a few days now. *Old growth and new growth: both are needed.* The old growth gives strength and stability to the vines. It's the old growth with the deep roots and the strong stems that withstand the cold of winter and the shock of the wind and storm and provide the support for the new growth to spring from. Most of us have stories of old growth. Growth from years back, the old habits and ways of life before Christ. My old growth+ includes escaping the grip of alcohol and pornography, cursing, explosive anger and more. I am so grateful for the old growth of former days.

But as I thought about old growth, I asked myself: OK Berrus, but *where's the fruit and the new growth?* God hasn't sold his pruning shears at some heavenly yard sale, has He?. He is still in the pruning business in the garden of our lives because He delights in present fruit. And present fruit only comes on new growth.

How about you? Can you tell me about the careful, if not painful, marks of recent pruning in your life? Our Father is a most persistent, purposeful and productive caretaker of life's garden. He moves among the branches of my relationships, my attitudes, my motives, my perspectives, my thoughts, my words, my deeds and my emotions. He chooses what can remain and what must go. Old growth, without pruning, grows hard and brittle and fruitless. So do our lives.

In this season of life, we never outgrow the need for pruning and new growth. I am grateful for the growth of decades past, but I am not satisfied with it. I want the marks of the gardener on my life today. I long for new growth and new fruit. I know you do to. It won't be easy or pain free, but it will be purposeful and guided by a hand of tender love who desires only our best.

**Self Check Questions:**

1. Remember and recall some of the old growth experiences of your past and give God thanks.
2. Where are evidences of new growth in your life?
3. How has God pruned you in the last few months?
4. What areas of your life have grown old and brittle and need renewal?
5. Would you be willing to ask a friend to pray for you specifically in one or two areas where God is at work?

**For Further Study:** Jn 15-16 how do the Word and Spirit combine to make the believer more fruitful?

Ga 5:22-23 Eph 5:9-18 Php 1:11-12 Col 1:6-10 Heb 13:15 Jas 3:17-18

Pruner of the Garden of my soul, I willingly lift up my life before you. Take away all that is withered, dead and barren, and give my life a fresh harvest of new growth that bears the fruit of Your likeness in abundance. You know I shrink away from your shears. You know I love comfort and routine. You know I would wither and die if I got my way. I long to have once more that strong sense of conviction of sin, of Your nearness, of my desperate need of Thee. Give me new growth once more, O Keeper of the vine. Be glorified as others see the evidence of Your skill in my life. In the name of Him who is THE VINE, Amen+

**Remember, you are very special to us and are praying for you continually. Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4**  
**Ron & Val**

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable, changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows, spending our time on eternity, owning nothing yet possessing everything that matters and lasts. We are Pilgrims in Paradox. Welcome to THE JOURNEY.