

Putting Down Roots: So Many Weeds!

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Turn to Proverbs 24 (Page 450)

Levi Lusko conference credit

Proverbs 24:30-34 – I went past the field of a sluggard, past the vineyard of someone who has no sense; thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and the stone wall was in ruins.

I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw: A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—and poverty will come on you like a thief and scarcity like an armed man.

This weeks message – “So many weeds!”

Setup “weeds” with series

Why this matters:

Personally

Family

Company

Nation

This is an unusual series:

Last week, I centered the message around the roots of a tree

This week, I’m centering the message around weeds

And really, I’m centering the message around a question:

Why don’t we weed?

In a garden or yard, why don’t we weed

But more importantly

In our spiritual, emotional, and relational world

Why don't we weed?

We don't weed because weeding is hard

Weeds come easy

Plants are difficult to grow

But weeds come easy

How many of you

I mean, you don't want to brag

But you're yards pretty awesome

Not very many weeds

Grass is green and thick

Show of hands – where are you?

OK – this next part's not for you

Where are my people?!?

If you sprayed the weeds

You might not have anything left

That's what I'm talkin' about

The University of Edinburgh recently performed a study

To see how far a dandelion seed would travel

Did you see this?

The University of Edinburgh found

That a dandelion seed can travel 100 km

They're using the research to help drone technology

Because God is smarter than we are

100 km!

That means that the state of Tennessee outlawed dandelions

They could spray roundup on the whole state

I mean, we'd all grow a 3rd arm

That'd be awesome

But Tennessee could outlaw dandelions

And we could still get a dandelion seed blown in from Huntsville

To restart the whole mess

But we'd have an extra arm to pull weeds with, so there's that...

It's tough to grow plants

But weeds come easy

Which makes weeding hard

In Genesis 3

Adam and Eve sin

And when they do

Weeds are introduced into the Garden of Eden

"Thorns and thistles" Genesis 3 says

But that's not all

With the weeds

Sin brought other consequences:

Snakes cursed

Obviously

Work cursed

Not that you have to work

Work is not a consequence of sin

One of the reason that retirees sometimes struggle to find purpose

Is that we are made to be productive

Work is not a curse

But sin curses our work

It's difficult

It can be unproductive

"By the sweat of your brow" God says

Work is cursed

Relationships cursed

For some of you, I just described your week

Genesis 3 says that relationships are hard because of sin

The husband tries to rule over his wife

The wife tries to rule over her husband

Relationships are cursed

God feels distant

I want you to catch this

It's stunning when you step back and look at it

At the end of Genesis 2

God presides over an intimate wedding ceremony

Between two completely open & vulnerable people

That's the end of Genesis 2

Then sin enters the picture

By the end of Genesis 3

Work is cursed

Relationships are cursed

And God banishes Adam & Eve from the Garden He made for them

By the end of Genesis 4

Cain has killed Abel

And Adam & Eve's great, great, great, great grandson has degraded women & marriage forever by introducing polygamy

Sin has unraveled the culture

And the spiritual weeds that began to grow

Remain strong to this day

But we don't weed because it's hard

We don't weed because we already did

I already pulled those weeds

I don't know what the problem is

That's the hard thing about life

Is these things keep popping up to be dealt with:

Dishes don't stay washed

Houses don't stay cleaned

Kids don't stay obedient
You finish the laundry
And you enjoy a glorious 12 minutes
Before you need to start the next load

There's a little game that goes along with this point

It's like a corollary
It's the game we call
Not my turn

This is the game

Where you see a weed
But since you pulled it last time
Or feel like you've dealt with it more than someone else
You're gonna let it sit there and grow
But you're not gonna deal with it
The dishes pile higher
The grass gets taller
And you're not gonna do it

Those are pretty harmless examples

But sometimes its not dishes and grass that are piling up

Sometimes its forgiveness

Or a deficit of kindness

Or an unwillingness to compromise

And you know the right thing to do

You know that God's prompting you towards something fairly specific

But you did it last time

So its just gonna sit there

James reminds us:

Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it. – James 4:17 (NLT)

Just remember

Sometimes a little sleep a little slumber

Is from laziness

And sometimes its from pride

But the result is the same

Poverty

Could be physical poverty

Could be spiritual or emotional or relational

But it's a lack either way

... And when we know better

... It's sin

We don't weed because it's hard

We don't weed because we already did

We don't weed because we don't have time

If you were to ask me why there are weeds in the flowerbed in front of my house

I'd tell you its because I don't have time

That's probably what I would tell you

I'd probably give you the same answer

If you asked about the weeds in my soul

Or the weeds in my family

Or the weeds in my character

That's probably what I would tell you

And yet, ABC News reports that

"The average American spends a staggering 11 hours, 54 minutes each day connected to some form of media — TV, smartphones, radio, games..."

That's 83 hours & 18 minutes / week

On our TVs, smartphones, radio or games

In 1942, CS Lewis wrote a classic novel

Screwtape letters

In the book, he fictionalizes this amazing relationship

Between a demon and his nephew

The older demon sending letters to the younger to coach and train him

To teach him to effectively keep people from following God

Look at this great quote

It was true in 1942

It's exponentially more applicable today

“Whatever their bodies do affects their souls. It is funny how mortals always picture us as putting things into their minds: in reality, our best work is done by keeping things out...” – Screwtape Letters

Last week, we said that the key to you having a healthy soul

Was investing in the Words of God

But we say we don't have time

Now to be honest

I'm a little skeptical of this number

I think there's some multi-tasking going on here

People listening to the radio in their car

Or looking at their smartphone while the TV's on, etc.

But let's say that its 100% off

That still means that we're spending almost 6 hours a day

Over 40 hours a week

Digesting media

Media that often pushes us in ways

That are antithetical to God

The sexualizing of our culture

The rampant division and hatred

The constant negativity

If we only changed this one area

We would free up HOURS every week

That God could put to better use

Just for comparison, the average American spends:

47 hours 36 minutes – sleep

34 hours 24 minutes – work

2/3 read their Bible once / month or less

Hannah Harrison – “We live in a world that is so concerned with what other people are saying or doing, that we forget to look inwardly at our hearts. Even in our stillest moments, we tend to be focused more on what other people are doing.”

That is so true

And you & I have to do better

Since I know you’re wondering

Forbes magazine reports that the average American family

Spends over \$3,000 on all these services each year

I just want to put this out here for all of us

So that when we say that we not only don’t have time to attend to weeds

But that we can’t afford to be generous or to tithe

Now listen to me a second

This is not to be snide or to give anybody a guilt trip

None of that helps

But bottom line:

If American Christians invested their time

And invested their money

In ways that lined up with what they *say* they believe

The United States of America would be drastically different

It is not ok for us to complain about culture

If we're not going to back it up with our life

We don't weed because it's hard

We don't weed because we already did

We don't weed because we don't have time

We don't weed because we don't want to get on our knees

Weeding the flowerbed is hard

You have to do it again and again

And you have to lower yourself

To do it

When Jesus died and rose again

He handed the church over to 11 shell-shocked young men

They were uneducated {Acts 4:13}

Ordinary

But God used them to change a city

And ultimately the world

At the start of Acts chapter 1

They were a little overwhelmed

The first thing they prayed for was help

Because 11 guys leading a church of 120

Was a tall order
By the end of Acts chapter 4
They were 12 guys
Leading a church of over 15,000
And they were just as overwhelmed then
As they were in chapter one
But God was just as able to handle it then
As He was in chapter one

That makes Acts 2:42 quite the understatement

It says, "They devoted themselves... to prayer."

I bet that's right

That word devoted is a little bit of a tame translation

It's the Greek word προσκαρτερέω (proskartereó)

And it literally means, "to continue to do something with intense effort... despite difficulty"

'to devote oneself to, to keep on, to persist in'

They were in completely over their head

They knew it

God knew it

People watching knew it

But "the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." {Acts 2:47b}

And if we're going to make progress pulling weeds in this life

In our homes

In our schools

In our nation

We're going to need to spend more time

On our knees in prayer

Because we'll be 100% in over our heads

In John 15, Jesus says:

If you remain in Me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing... If you remain in Me and My Words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be My disciples. {John 15:5b, 7-8}

There used to be a phrase in church circles

I used it often

It was called "Redemptive potential"

The idea was – what would happen if a church

Let's say WellSpring

Went all in on the mission

And we worked hard

And we sacrificed

And we used all of the talents and gifts that God has given us

To their maximum potential

What is that potential to be a redeeming agent in the world

What is WellSpring's redemptive potential?

Humbly – that's the wrong question

Jesus is not up in Heaven saying

I hope they can pull this off

Cause I sure don't know what to do

God has never called the qualified

He has always qualified the called

Those willing to sacrifice themselves

To lay down their time, their resources, their preferences

To be willing to be lead by God

In over their heads

And humbly

One of the problems with the American church

Is that the problems our world is facing

Our larger than *our* redemptive potential can manage

But the problems our world is facing

Have never been larger than our great God in Heaven can manage

And today is no exception!

Last week, I forewarned you about where we were going to go

I said over the next three weeks of this series

We're going to give you a prime opportunity to make yourself available to God

To put down roots with God

And to put down roots with WellSpring

TODAY – Rooted leader signup

Rooted leader signup details

8/22/21 – Impact Team signup

8/29/21 – Rooted Group signup

We cannot go

Where God wants us to go

Unless we are “devoting ourselves” to prayer

With intense effort... despite difficulty

“Devoting ourselves” to studying the Scriptures

With intense effort... despite difficulty

“Devoting ourselves” to being family to one another

With intense effort... despite difficulty

I want to ask all of us to invest these 10 weeks

From just after Labor Day to before Thanksgiving

If you’re part of a LifeGroup

We’re asking your group to use this as your study for those 10 weeks

I ask that you give it due attention

That you invite God to have a bigger role in your life

And in your family