



HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?
Part 1

By André and Jenny Roebert

Few things can compare to the pleasure someone can experience from walking through and gazing upon a beautiful, fragrant garden. The peace and tranquillity one gets to experience can be more therapeutic than most have given it credit for. The trouble however, is that while everyone can enjoy a beautiful garden, not everyone can successfully create a beautiful garden! I have learnt from past experience that if you are unable to identify seedlings from weeds, you can end up throwing out what would make your garden delightful, and find yourself nurturing what would make it disastrous! Leaving you disappointed, disillusioned and garden less!

Just the same, the Bible, often likens our hearts and lives to gardens. With the correct amount of

attention and care, our lives have the potential to produce magnificent gardens with spectacular beauty! There are numerous accounts, like the parable of the sower, where our hearts are likened to soil. Lives that are dependent on Christ and His Word, will see the soil of their hearts, having the potential to becoming soft, workable and nourished. These hearts are able to produce the most beautiful and useful gardens.

Abundant life in the midst of adversity

Perhaps what amazes me the most, is the fact that the Bible promises lives that resemble lush abundance and beauty in the midst of most adverse conditions. In the book of Jeremiah it speaks of a life that chooses to completely trust in the Lord

as being like a tree that is planted near a stream of water. When that tree is exposed to tremendous heat, instead of it shrivelling, wilting or dying, it keeps being nourished and remains vital and productive. Psalm 1 uses the same type of imagery, saying that the tree will continue to bear fruit in and out of season, in good times and bad. Psalm 92, amongst others, speaks of lives that are fruitful and flourishing even while in old age! Mark 4 describes a life that embraces God and His Word, to being like a giant mustard tree that in spite of very small or insignificant beginnings, matured to provide shelter and protection to others.

Some of my favourite 'life to garden' imageries, are found in the book of Isaiah:

The Word of God clearly instructs us to be diligent in this regard. We are to keep guard over our minds and hearts and not allow worrisome, fearful thoughts to contaminate the soil of the gardens of our lives.

Isaiah 58:11, "And the Lord shall guide you continually and satisfy you in drought and in dry places and make strong your bones. And you shall be like a watered garden and like a spring of water whose waters fail not."

Isaiah 51:3, "For the Lord will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places. And He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song or instrument of praise."

So, in spite of adverse or difficult circumstances, if the soil of our hearts is properly cared for, it will produce the exact abundant, fruitful life our Heavenly Father purposed it to produce, since the foundation of the world!

Sounds pretty wonderful doesn't it? However, if we don't learn to identify and recognise the weeds from the seedlings in the gardens of our lives, we are going to end up throwing away the very things that can cause us joy, beauty and success and end up spending all our time and effort nurturing the things that will destroy us!

I love the Word of God because it doesn't just explain the truth of our lives having the potential of becoming a magnificent, spectacular, beautiful garden. It teaches us how to recognise exactly what to throw out of our gardens and what to keep!

Those pesky, little life suckers, called weeds!

To begin with, let's learn to identify and deal with those pesky, little life suckers, called weeds! Even though some weeds appear to be harmless and even beautiful, they are dangerous invaders that are destined to suck the life source out of your

garden and destroy your peace and joy. In the spiritual sense, the weeds in our lives, if not immediately dealt with, will strangle and choke the incorruptible seed of God's Word in our hearts and prevent it from producing life and faith. So we need to cast out these dangerous invaders that are designed to stop the flow of supernatural wisdom, power and peace in our lives.

Take a look at what 1 Peter 5 says about this very process of casting out the weeds from our lives!

1 Peter 5:7-10, "Casting the whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully."

The Greek word for care used in this scripture is *merimonia*, implying worries and concerns. This very same word is used in the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:22, where it speaks about the "cares of this world...". Once again, the word cares here is from the Greek word *merimonia*, implying material worries and concerns that will choke, suffocate and strangle faith out of us. Note, it does not say the material things of this world will suffocate our faith, but rather the worry over not having these provisions will.

Then in Luke 21:34, we read again about the "cares of this life...", the Greek translation referring to that same word, *merimonia*, except, this time it's connected to life - *biotikos* (biology). Meaning, the worry inflicted on us through the events or incidents in life that are troublesome, trying and difficult.

So, from studying the scripture, we can conclude that we are not to have anxious, worrying thoughts about the necessities and provisions in life or about material needs. We are not to worry

or be anxious about any events or incidents in our lives, not even when we face troublesome, trying and difficult times!

Worry is a weed!

Worry is a weed that will most certainly choke the life and faith right out of our lives! That's why Peter says we are to waste no time in casting it right out of our lives and replacing it with the truth of God's Word!

Psalms 55:22 confirms this: "Cast your burden on the Lord [releasing the weight of it] and He will sustain you; He will never allow the [consistently] righteous to be moved (made to slip, fall, or fail)."

Keeping our lives free from worry is a very important part of tending the gardens of our lives. The more we spend time getting acquainted with the truth of God's Word, we are able to identify and differentiate between thoughts that are inspired by faith and thoughts inspired by fear.

The Word of God clearly instructs us to be diligent in this regard. We are to keep guard over our minds and hearts and not allow worrisome, fearful thoughts to contaminate the soil of the gardens of our lives. Be ever mindful of how your garden is growing. What a joy it will be to see how God's peace and love saturate every part of it, radiating His mercy and blessing. Happy gardening.

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