

# Here Comes God With the Pruning Shears

by K.P. Yohannan

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*God's pruning process is a deliberate and necessary step in our spiritual growth, designed to make us even more fruitful by removing things that hinder our growth and relationship with Him.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 119:71, John 15:2, Hebrews 12:11, James 1:2

**Topics:** "Trust in God's Process", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

K.P. Yohannan emphasizes the necessity of God's pruning in our spiritual lives, illustrating that while we may rejoice in the fruits of the Spirit, God's inspection often involves cutting away what is unnecessary for greater growth. He explains that pruning can lead to feelings of loneliness and confusion, akin to a 'dark night of the soul,' where we may feel abandoned despite being in a process of divine preparation. Yohannan encourages believers to trust in God's wisdom during these challenging times, recognizing that the Master Gardener is shaping us for a more fruitful future. The pruning process, though painful, is essential for character transformation and a deeper relationship with God. Ultimately, we are called to walk by faith, even when we cannot see the immediate results of God's work in our lives.

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## Transcript

You are so excited. For the first time in your Christian walk, you have discovered a fruit of the Spirit in an area of your life in which you'd struggled for years. Just when you'd almost given up, you read John 15:5: "He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit." Suddenly you understood that the whole concept of fruit-bearing was so simple: By staying in Jesus, letting His life flow through you, the fruit would naturally grow. Now it has actually happened. You are rejoicing, and you can't wait to show the new fruit to your Heavenly Father.

To your great joy, He lets you know that He will soon come to inspect the branch in your life that has produced fruit. You can hardly wait for His arrival and suspect that He will surprise you with a certificate or a reward for doing so well. But to your bewilderment, when He arrives He carries nothing but a pair of big pruning shears in His hands. What is He planning to do? Somehow you get the feeling that His idea of inspecting your fruit-bearing branch doesn't exactly match your own expectations.

John 15:2 tells us what God has in mind: "Every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit." This means that He will not leave us alone but instead is determined to make us even more fruitful. His strategy is to begin a very deliberate pruning process by allowing us to encounter troubles, tribulations and difficulties. These adversities serve as His shears and pruning knife. That doesn't sound like anything

we would choose for ourselves. Often, our biggest concern is how much God is planning to cut off of our branch!

But let me tell you about the tea plantations in my native country of India. Thousands of acres are covered with beautiful, lush, deep green plants. But if you were to visit these same tea estates during a certain time of the year, you would immediately think that something had gone very wrong. Instead of thriving bushes with healthy, growing leaves, you would only find naked little stumps with a few bare branches clinging to them. They look dead and hopeless. All of their beauty is gone.

If you were to search for answers, you would find laborers with sharp knives and shears going from tree to tree and mercilessly cutting nearly everything off, while others continually haul away truckloads of green, leafy branches. That is pruning. When God puts His knife to our branches and begins to slice off the parts that must go, we often experience great loneliness, low emotional feelings and pain. Pruning actually creates a temporary dry spell in our spiritual life very similar to those barren tree stumps on the tea plantations.

Saint John of the Cross from the 16th century termed this season of our lives "the dark night of the soul."<sup>1</sup> Very often we feel confused, and we fail to understand what is going on. We pray, but God doesn't seem to hear. We fast, but our situation stays the same. We repent of every imaginable sin we could have committed, but find no answer. Discouraged and frightened, we conclude that something is wrong with our spiritual life. This is the most dangerous time during the pruning process, and it's the one most often used by the Enemy to trip us up.

He intends to deceive us into thinking that we have backslidden, have lost God's grace and should quit serving God. Or he tries to convince us to create a counterfeit spiritual life to compensate for what we think we have lost. If we believe him, we will generate all kinds of carnal activities so no one would easily discover that God's presence has left us. But all the while, nothing is wrong with our spiritual life, and we haven't lost anything. We are just going through the pruning process.

If we could only recognize that it is the hand of God that holds the knife, then we would be able to do the right thing: trust in His wisdom, humble ourselves and honor Him by walking in faith rather than sight. Then we would be able to accept the wilderness, the cutting, the discipline, the loneliness and the pain as necessary preparation for the future. As the Master Gardener, God can already see how this pruning process will bring about character changes within us, transform our nature and deepen our relationship with Him. He knows how best to care for us. Choose to walk by faith during your "dark night of the soul."

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