

Devotional Readings

Reading #1 – Teacher “Trees”

Written by: Marva Marrett, in collaboration with Sheila Holder and Vanessa Smith.

Text for meditation: Psalm 1:3

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Song suggestion: TREE SONG by Ken Medema

Trees are an exceptionally important part of our environment. Some of the largest living things are trees. “The largest Sequoias in northern California weigh more than six blue whales. The tallest Australian eucalyptus trees and redwoods tower as high as a 30-story building. Some of the Bristlecone pines in the American west are 4,000 years old”.

God places trees in nature because he loves us. “Trees do more than provide us with building materials, food and medicine. As a bonus, trees produce sugar. The cellulose fiber we call wood is actually only thousands of sugar molecules linked into long chains. In recent years scientists have also learned that trees communicate with each other. They cool the air and pump enough moisture into the air to transform a dry desert-like climate.”

Trees are necessary in the feeding relationships of all organisms. They use carbon dioxide, water and sunlight to make food and produce that most important of all gases, oxygen.

But most significantly, trees remind us of our relationship to our heavenly Father and to each other. Just as the trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere so too should we be infiltrated with the Holy Spirit. We must always be actively pulling in the water of life, God’s word and live constantly in the sunshine of His grace.

If we do that then we will bring forth our fruit in season. Fruit that will be food to the hungry, water to the thirsty, hope to the depressed, strength to the

weak, light to those in darkness and joy to those who are sad. Our presence will be as life-giving oxygen to those who are dead in trespasses and sin.

Trees are not only takers but givers also. To flourish the tree takes from what God has supplied but it takes so it can give. Our mission is one of service and without giving to others we are useless and like a dead tree, fit only to be cut down and discarded.

Trees use God-given resources to support the nutrient needs of all other terrestrial organisms. It is only as we use all that God has provided for us to aid in the upliftment and development of our fellow men that we can be like “trees planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”

References: Ponte, Lowell. What good is a tree? Readers’ Digest.

www.creationmoments.org accessed 2.04.2008.

Tree Song

I saw a tree by the riverside one day as I walked along.
Straight as an arrow and pointing to the sky growing tall and strong.
"How do you grow so tall and strong?" I said to the riverside tree.
This is the song my tree friend sang to me:

Chorus:

I've got roots growing down to the water,
I've got leaves growing up to the sunshine,
and the fruit that I bear is a sign of the life in me.
I am shade from the hot summer sundown.
I am nest for the birds of the heavens.
I'm becoming what the Lord of trees has meant me to be:
A strong young tree.

I saw a tree in the wintertime, when snow lay on the ground.
Straight as an arrow and pointing to the sky winter winds blew all around.
"How do you stay so tall and strong?" I said to the wintertime tree.
This is the song my tree friend sang to me:

I saw a tree in the city streets, where buildings blocked the sun.
Green and lovely I could see it gave joy to everyone.
"How do you grow in the city streets?" I said to the downtown tree.
This is the song my tree friend sang to me:

Reading #2 – Teacher “Seeds”

Written by: Marva Marrett, in collaboration with Sheila Holder and Vanessa Smith.

Text for meditation: Matthew 13:3-8

Song suggestions: Read your Bibles, Pray everyday.
Sow, sow, sow the word by Craig

And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow. And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them. But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

The parable of the sower makes it clear to us that seeds need certain conditions for growth. It suggests that too little earth and too much sun is not a good combination of factors. Neither is the presence of thorns ideal for seed growth. Rather the indication is that good ground is necessary for growth.

Most students have tried to grow seeds in their elementary science classes. By trial and error they have discovered that seeds need some moisture, a certain range of temperature, the presence of air and some may need light. They have also discovered that some kind of growth medium is also needed. Without the right conditions, a seed will not grow well, if at all.

Growth is an ongoing process and is an indicator of life.

How is your spiritual growth? Are the conditions for ‘growth in grace’ being provided?

Ellen White refers to prayer as the ‘breath of the soul.’ Can you afford not to breathe? Oxygen taken in by the seed is essential for the process of respiration, from which the growing embryo obtains energy. Energy is

needed for all life processes. Ventilation and air circulation are also important to limit damping off diseases. Without prayer, one's spiritual growth is arrested. There is no energy for life's battles and setbacks and disease may even set in. For good growth, pray without ceasing.

A seed begins the growth process by absorbing water, lots of water. This activates an enzyme which increases respiration and cell growth. Soon the embryo becomes too large, the seed coat bursts open and the growing plant emerges. John, the revelator, advises us to 'take of the water of life freely' because it flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb (Rev. 22:1&17). This water is available to all. Why should you thirst when God's word is freely available for study and meditation? Without study of the word, spiritual enzymes are lacking and growth becomes retarded. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth. For good growth, drink of the water of life freely.

Seeds are relatively small but when grown often become large trees. We each have the potential to experience phenomenal growth but only if the conditions are right. Pray that our growth will be like that of the mustard seed "which a man took, and sowed in his field; which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." Grow, grow, grow!!

References: Kennel, Holly S. *Gardening in Western Washington*. WSU Extension

Reading #3 – Elementary – “Water”

Written by: Marva Marrett, in collaboration with Sheila Holder and Vanessa Smith.

Songs of Solomon 4: 7&15 Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee...a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.

Judges 1:15 And she said unto him, Give me a blessing: for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of **water**....

Suggested song: “God Made You Special” – Veggie Tales

Water is a very special substance. In fact you may consider it to be the most important liquid ever.

Living things would cease to exist without water

Your brain is 70% water while your lungs are approximately 90% water.

Water helps digest your food, remove waste products from your body and keep your body temperature constant.

Water can dissolve more substances than any other liquid.

Water can exist in three different forms as a solid, a liquid and as a gas.

It also gets lighter when it freezes so that ice floats on water making it possible for you to go ice skating in the winter; and keeping the fish alive and warm in the water beneath the ice.

Water is so special that scientists have not been able to make any liquid like it.

Just like water, you are a very special person. You are so special that there is only one you.

Only you have your pattern of fingerprints.

Only you have your particular combination of genes and DNA.

Only you have your eyes.

Only you have your style of handwriting.

Only you have the unique sound of your voice.

Only you have your unique gifts and talents.

Thank God today that He made you special.

References:

Layton, Julia. *How Handwriting Analysis Works*. www.howstuffworks.com

Wilson, Tracy V. *How Biometrics works*. www.howstuffworks.com