

John 15:1-5, 8

- ✓ Is not cutting away a cancerous growth but taking away otherwise **healthy growth making room for intended growth.**
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2 Corinthians 11:23-28, Acts 9:16; there are a few things he doesn't mention here: leaving his family, home country, his people, his securities (wealth).

- ✓ What is the Kingdom of God worth to you? Worth = what you are willing to pay for it!!
 - ✓ Many are afraid to completely commit themselves to the Kingdom because they may have to give up things very dear to them.
 - ✓ **Matthew 6:33**; You're familiar with this verse? Our natural tendency is to switch these two phrases.
 - ✓ In pruning, God isn't just trying to take away—He's trying to provide room.
 - ✓ We're going to continue in that vein this morning by looking at the prime areas where God prunes in people's lives.
 - ✓ "Seek first His kingdom," God will always prune those things that we seek first, love most, and begrudge giving up.
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1. Let's look at the first area where God's shears will be at work: The people we love the most.

- ✓ God isn't necessarily severing these relationships, but He is pruning them so that God is indeed our first and primary love.
 - ✓ What sort of pruning might He be doing with you with regard to those you love?
 - ✓ Maybe it is trusting the care of those you love to God – you don't own them anyway. Are you so focused on them that God is coming second? I hear the shears!!!
 - ✓ Maybe it is the support of your family who may not share your same commitment to the Lord?
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2. A Second area where God's shears will be at work: our supposed right to know why God does what He does.

- ✓ We are essentially born with the notion that we deserve to be in control of our lives.
 - ✓ The problem with it is that it is in conflict with the life of faith (faith doesn't see or have much under control, faith trusts the One who does!).
 - ✓ How do you explain to a child of God that the trying time they are going through is what they need to grow?
 - ✓ We go through seasons in our faith walk when we are unable to answer questions like Why? Or How Long? All we can answer is Who? Our loving Father and He has proven worthy of our trust!
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3. Let's look at one more area: our sources of security and significance.

- ✓ Let me first say, should the believer have any other security or source of significance other than the Lord?
 - ✓ Jesus claims out right to be all we need for security, significance, and life!! "I am the way, the truth,..."
 - ✓ We run to other sources for our security and significance, therefore, this generation of believers is some of the most insecure.
 - ✓ **Where do your securities lie?** Money and possessions? Is there something in you that thinks, "I'm O.K. because I have them or I'm not O.K. because I don't?"
 - ✓ Do we really believe that if we put His kingdom as first priority that He will add these things to us?
 - ✓ Could it be the struggles that you are having either with an abundance or the lack-there-of is God saying, "Let go of this, I'm your security"?
 - ✓ **What are your sources of significance?**
 - Your Job -- For Abraham, it was his miracle son, Isaac.
 - Your Children -- For Gideon, it was his huge army.
 - Your Position. -- **What is it for you?**
 - ✓ He may not ask for you to literally give up anything, but I can assure you He is asking for you to hand them over in your heart!
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4. Paul was a man who found security and significance in many things Philippians 3:5-6.

- ✓ But the time we get to know him here in N.T., find a man pruned until there was nothing left of his self-life **Philippians 3:7-8**
- ✓ Notice his life is focused completely on fruit bearing **Philippians 3:13-14**

Philippians 3:15 This is the direction God wants to take all of us -- seeking first His kingdom -- will we let Him?
