

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

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Dearest grandchild,

Jon Skinner is a Community Forester with the Missouri Department of Conservation. In a recent communion meditation he made reference to “stem girdling roots”. I have been thinking about this ever since. This is a condition that never happens in the wild, but is unique to trees raised in small containers. The root systems in potted trees are forced to grow in circles. When the tree is transplanted in an open field the roots remember the way they were trained and continue to grow in circles. This can create “stem girdling roots” that choke out vital water and nutrients to the tree. Trees with this problem may look healthy, but cannot stand the storm. They lack the wide foundation of roots that are necessary.

The cure for this condition is severe pruning. The roots with the wrong memory must be cut off so that new roots can grow correctly.

The same thing that happens in potted trees can also happen to people. Several years ago I got to travel to Ghana with Uncle John. This is the only place I ever preached where I had 3 translators at the same time. I preached in English, and 3 men from 3 different tribes translated what I had to say. On my last day there I traveled to a church and my translator could speak 5 languages. After church there were several baptisms, and later, as we walked to catch a cab I asked this young man about his dreams. He said that he dreamed of being a business man. When I probed more deeply he explained that he wanted to buy used shoes, stand on the street corner, and when a car stopped for the red light he could step to the window and try to sell them a pair of used shoes.

I wept! This highly intelligent young man was root bound beyond my ability to understand. He was intelligent enough to speak five languages fluently, but incapable of dreaming beyond selling a sack full of used shoes at a stop light.

There is also the possibility that you might also be “root bound” at a different level. How big is your dream? What self imposed limits have you placed on your future? Abram lived in a tent. He had no idea how big the world really was, yet he dared to dream that in his “Seed” all the families of the earth would be blessed. They have been! Jesus said that Abraham saw “my day”, he rejoiced and was glad in it (Jn. 8:56). We can have the same kind of faith that Abram did!

The Spanish Bible has an interesting play on words with reference to Abram’s faith. In Gen. 15:3 Abram told God “Mira” - which means “look”. Abram had been married for many years and had no children. As if God were not aware of this, Abram challenged Him to “look”. God responded by saying “Mira” to Abram. Abram told God to “look” at him, and God told Abram to “look” at the stars. It was then that Abram believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness (Gen. 15:6). You too can “look” at the stars and dream big dreams!

Please consider this passage from the Proverbs and try to apply it to your own life: **“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways**

acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” (Prov 3:5-6 KJV)

The Scriptures teach that people with Spiritual gifts are like members of a body (1 Cor. 12:12 - 31). As a member of Christ’s body, you need to function as God intends. If every member of the body does not function, then the body is handicapped. Many handicapped people are blind, crippled, deaf or dumb. Even though they can still do some things, they are still handicapped. So, it is not only important for you to function, it is also important for them to function as God designed you to. You can walk on your hands, for example, but not very far. You can write with your feet, but not very well. Each member of the body needs to function as God designed them to.

The point is, you will be happy and most productive when you accept your own “gift” and understand your own personal “calling” from God.

Knofel Staton told the story many years ago of a young man who graduated from the Lincoln Christian College and became a preacher. He was never happy and fulfilled, however, as a preacher. He had always dreamed of being in law enforcement. When he followed the calling that God had given him, he was happy and fulfilled. At the time Knofel told this story that man was assigned to be the personal body guard to the governor of Illinois. As such, he was in a position to give spiritual guidance and encouragement to one of the most influential men in the state. When you follow the leading of God in your life, you too will be both happy and productive.

Many years ago I was privileged to hear the late Dr. Wilson Greatbach speak. This devout believer invented the pacemaker. He gives God the credit for guiding him to this remarkable invention that has given life and health to so many. Here is a brief video about him:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLZB1118Ads>

You all come from good families and can be anything that God calls you to be. If God calls you to be a housewife and mother, then that is precisely what you need to do. If God calls you to be president of the United States, then that’s what you need to be.

Don’t allow your roots to grow in a circle.

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce