



[TOP](#)

## Daily Devotional - A Lesson in Pruning

JANUARY 11TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

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#### John 15:1-4

Years ago I lived in Fruitland, North Carolina. It was apple country, and several of my parishioners were growers. I remember the time I stopped by to pay one of them a visit, and his wife told me he was in the orchard. I found him out there, mercilessly cutting branches. Without thinking, I said, “You’re going to kill that tree!” He turned around and said, “You stick to preaching, and leave the pruning to me.”

This gentleman and I became friends, and it was from him that I learned about the pruning process. Cutting the way he did was necessary to produce an abundant crop of the best fruit. It might look as if the tree was going to die, but new growth would spring from the wounds. Our conversations helped me understand why the Lord sometimes acts as a pruning force in people’s lives.

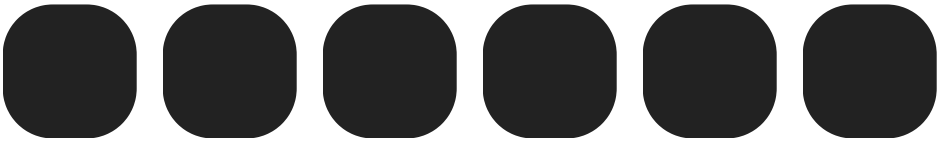
To get a plentiful crop of spiritual fruit, our heavenly Father must remove anything that distracts or deters us from serving Him. The process is oftentimes painful. I know I have cried out, “More, Lord?” when He has taken the “knife” to me. But the result is always satisfying—I’m a better, more accurate reflection of Jesus Christ after God cuts away a fleshly habit or worldly attitude.

Being loved by God doesn't mean we'll be coddled—our comfort is not His primary interest. A grower prunes an apple tree to get a bountiful harvest. In the same way, the heavenly Father sometimes lets us feel pain so He can bring forth greater growth and more spiritual fruit in our lives.

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