

Faith Maintenance

Scripture Reading — Psalm 131; John 15:1-8

Every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.

John 15:2 —

Every spring, calm, law-abiding citizens grab sharp objects that can cut, slash, and lop. It's pruning time. Pruning is often misunderstood. It can look like horrible mutilation to people who have no experience with it.

I live on a fifth of an acre, a modest lot on which we once had eleven fruit trees. After our first growing season an experienced gardener volunteered to help me with my first pruning. I loved those trees like family members: small, vulnerable relatives needing tender treatment. I wanted to leave as much growth as I could, hoping for fruit to come soon!

He knew better. He lopped and cut and snipped and sheared, and when he was done, half of my beloved fruit trees lay on the ground. He left nothing but a skeleton!

So the next year I didn't invite him back. I pruned my own trees. You should have seen how many peaches we had that year! But a week before harvest two main branches broke under the weight of the fruit. That year and the next, my beloved tree was broken.

Eugene Peterson calls Psalm 131 the pruning psalm. This small psalm lops off "unruly ambition," our tendency to act as if we are totally independent. It also cuts away "apron strings" that we no longer need as we mature. If we are not careful, doing things our way might break us in half. Thank God for being our gardener.

Prayer

Lord, help us to calm ourselves and to quiet our ambitions. Help us also to mature and grow, moving from basic to deeper faith. Prune us as you see fit, in Jesus's name. Amen

Devotion topics: [Bible](#), [Books of the Bible](#), [Psalms](#)

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