

Reading: Deuteronomy 32:10,11; John 15:1,2

Topic: Prodding & Pruning

INTRODUCTION: Our goal as human beings is to be comfortable and without _____, but God's goal for us is _____, and that requires change and discomfort at times.

I. PRODDING:

A. The Eagle's Nest:

1. The eagle builds a nest in a high place – on a cliff or in a _____ on a hill or mountain, and the nest structure is built with sticks that are intertwined together to make a _____ and sturdy home.
2. The nest bowl where the eggs are laid and where the chicks will _____ is lined with soft material like grass, moss and feathers to make a _____ place for them to live. Job 39:27

B. Time To Grow:

1. Once the fertilized eggs are laid in the _____, they are incubated by the mother eagle for most of the time except for brief periods when the father eagle will take a _____ while she does some flying to hunt.
2. After about 35-40 days of incubation, the eggs begin to hatch and the little _____ appear, usually there are two per _____.
3. The little chicks have a comfortable warm home to live in with _____ brought directly to their mouth by their parents and _____ is easy and enjoyable for them.
4. The chicks _____ very quickly under these ideal conditions and after about 10-12 weeks, they are starting to feel a little bit crowded in the warm _____.

C. The Prodding Time:

1. Eagles are not made to _____ in a comfortable nest for the rest of their lives, so when the time comes to learn to _____, something has to be done to motivate them to start moving.
2. Mother eagle uses her talons to rip out the _____ comfortable lining of the nest and then digs up the sharp twigs in the structure to force the chicks up onto the rim of the _____. Deut. 32:11
3. The chicks are then bumped off the nest and forced to learn to _____, the real purpose for which they exist, majestic birds that _____ created.

D. Spiritual Prodding:

1. When we are born into the Kingdom of God, and begin our spiritual _____ as a babe in Christ, we experience the joy and peace of our newfound relationship with _____. Rom. 14:17
2. We are led and _____ by pastors, teachers and fellow believers through Bible Studies, teachings and preachings, along with fellowship _____ the Body of Christ. I Pt. 2:2,3
3. During this honeymoon phase of our spiritual lives, it is _____ to become very comfortable and contented in our soft nest and want to remain in this comfort _____ until Jesus comes. Amos 6:1
4. God may begin to use things to disturb our comfortable position in order to get us _____ on to the better and deeper things that He has _____ for us. Heb. 6:1
5. Above all, God desires His children to keep moving _____ and to keep growing in the things of God, progressing to maturity and helping others to do the _____. Heb. 5:12
6. The prodding of God may be unpleasant for the _____ but if we respond correctly to it, we will become like the _____ that God created to mount up higher. Is. 40:31

II. PRUNING:

A. Vine & Branches:

1. Jesus used several different illustrations to teach about spiritual _____ and growth, and one of the easiest ones to understand is the vine and branches depiction of our _____ with God. Jn. 15:5
2. Jesus Christ is our source of _____, both natural and spiritual, and when we are born again, the life of Christ has flowed into us causing our spiritual _____ to begin to grow and develop. Jn. 15:4
3. The main vine possesses the life that _____ into the attached branches and gives them the needed moisture and nutrients to _____ and mature.

B. The Pruning Time:

1. The gardener who inspects the growing vines is encouraged by the _____ and expansion of them but as time progresses, there are some undesirable things that _____ up that hinder the growth.
2. When it is time for the unwanted things to be _____, the gardener takes a sharp instrument of some kind and begins to _____ or cut things off that shouldn't be there. Jn. 15:2
3. The _____ and cutting does not look pleasant at the time, but it will result in much greater fruit production in the _____ term.

C. Spiritual Pruning:

1. God is the gardener, and we are the branches that grow from the life-giving _____, and what God is looking for in us is _____ production. Gal. 5:22,23
2. When God inspects the spiritual _____ production of His branches, sometimes He finds some things that are hindering the full production process, and so He starts to _____ and cut.
3. The pruning and cutting procedure is not _____ to go through – it might be through conviction of God's Spirit, or through the preaching of the _____ of God, or even a rebuke by the Lord using one of His servants and we individually choose whether to accept it or fight against it. Rev. 3:19
4. However, when the pruning and cutting is _____, a remarkable thing happens – there will be a surge in the production of spiritual _____ and it will be pleasing and glorifying to God. Jn. 15:8

CONCLUSION: When everything in our lives is going smoothly all of the _____, we tend to get to a comfort _____ and want to settle there. God wants us to keep growing and producing so in order to get us moving, He may make us uncomfortable in our _____ or start to prune us so that we will produce more spiritual _____ to glorify Him.