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Jennifer's Corner

by Jennifer Martin
**Pruning Back
the Leaves**



Often, I remember my grandfather cutting away branches of bushes around his house that were dying. To help them grow back healthy, he said. I didn't understand at the time – the bush looked dead enough as it was, and now it looked like he was just making it worse. The bush looked frail and naked, exposed to the elements without leaves or branches to protect it.

But to my surprise, the bushes would grow back – healthier, livelier than before, with full leaves and big branches.

Occasionally there are things in your life that need pruning back. Negative influences can come out of nowhere and assault your emotions, senses, and your very being.

What is it in your life that continues to hurt you, but you still keep it around as some sort of emotional comfort? Is it a verbally abusive significant other? A friend who keeps getting you into situations that makes you uncomfortable? A family member who can't say anything positive to you? Maybe some sort of sin, like drinking or sexual promiscuity, or something that's unhealthy for you, like smoking or overeating?

There is never a better time to prune away the bad leaves so that new growth can come in its place. God has promised to make the best for you – if you can get rid of the things that are keeping you from him, and keeping you from being happy.

Of course, it's going to hurt to cut those negative, bad branches out of your life. The pain and loss of losing those branches that had been a part of you for so long will make you feel frail, naked, lonely, and lost at first. But trust in God, and he will use that pain to your behalf – and replace it with fuller branches and healthier leaves than you could ever imagine. Don't ever think that God won't transform even the worst loss into something beautiful for Him.

Walking through Lee's campus now, before the first hints of early spring start to make their way around campus, can seem really depressing. Winter brings about the death of many plants and the hibernation of many animals. The cold and the rather bipolar weather of the Tennessee Valley can weigh down on us, making life seem slow and sluggish.

But what may seem cold and dead can easily be brought to life again, if only we give it the right chance: sunshine and a little warmth. Maybe that's where you are right now – you just feel dead inside, for whatever reason, and maybe you feel like you'll never feel alive again. Maybe you're already frail, naked, and lonely.

Then you need to continue to trust in God for all your needs, emotional and physical. You have potential. You have the ability to grow for Him. Don't ever give up on yourself – God never will.



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