

## How Does Your Garden Grow?

Joe Slater

I presume you have your garden in by now. If you're like me, you're looking forward to harvesting those nutritious veggies! Somehow the store-bought variety just doesn't measure up.

If you planted okra, what do you expect to harvest? It's a weird question, but you probably know already what I'm driving at. Okra seed won't produce sweet corn or cabbage no matter how much you desire them. God designed living things to reproduce after their own kind (Genesis 1:11-25).

That biological principle applies to spiritual concerns too. God's word is spiritual seed (Luke 8:11). When it is planted into good soil (honest hearts) it produces a harvest. In Acts 2, Peter planted that seed into the hearts of a multitude of people. Many believed and asked what they should do (v. 37). Peter told them to repent and be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (v. 38). Some 3000 souls did just that, becoming disciples of Jesus. God gave the name "Christian" to such disciples (Acts 11:26).

When that same gospel seed is planted into honest hearts today, what harvest should we expect? It brought forth Christians about 2000 years ago. Would it produce something different today? No, because seed still brings forth fruit after its kind!

The confusion in the religious world isn't the result of the pure seed being sown. Rather, it exists because some other "seed" has been planted (traditions of men, creeds, opinions, dogmas). Those things have produced all manner of division, confusion, and hostility.

God's word needs no improvement (as if there were such a thing)! Our need is not to add to it, take from it, or modify it in any way, but simply to believe it, obey it, and live by it. May God help us to do just that!

## Whose Preacher Are You?

Last week we were blessed to visit with many dear family members and friends. One of the friends was Garrett, age 7. We have known Garrett since he was a baby. Ever since he started talking, Garrett has been known for his forthright way with words.

Garrett goes to school with a friend named Zach. Zach has been to Bible class and worship with Garrett, but he generally finds other things to do on Sunday mornings that are a lot more fun.

One Monday morning Garrett and Zach were riding to school together. Zach had gone hunting with his dad Sunday morning while Garrett and his family gathered with the church. Garrett informed Zach: "We're supposed to want to go to heaven, and we learn about going to heaven in Bible class. I'm supposed to tell you about it. So there—I told you!"

Why was it so important for Garrett to tell Zach? Why is it so important for you and me to tell others? "I'm Zach's preacher," Garrett told his parents one day. "What do you mean?" they asked. "Zach doesn't go to church and have a preacher, so I'm his preacher."

Whose preacher are you? Risen from the dead, Jesus charged disciples: "*Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned*" (Mark 16:15-16).

Be someone's preacher!

--Author unknown (via *Bulletin Gold*)

**We Christians forget so easily that we are not citizens of earth en route to heaven, but citizens of heaven temporarily residing on earth."**

--Vance Havner

## I'VE LEARNED ENOUGH

During their conversation at a dinner party, Albert Einstein's young neighbor asked the white-haired scientist, "What are you actually by profession?" "I devote myself to the study of physics," Einstein replied. The girl looked at him in astonishment. "You mean to say you study physics at your age?" she exclaimed. "I finished studying physics a year ago" (*Today in the Word*, September 25, 1992).

It's a pretty common mindset. Any student in school longs for the day when they can "finish." Maybe a student is excited for the day when he can stop taking math classes. Perhaps another student looks forward to being done with college, so she doesn't have to take classes anymore. In general, there is an excitement to "stop learning." Unfortunately, if we aren't learning and growing, we are becoming stagnant and outdated.

Unfortunately, this also happens spiritually. Maybe at one point a Christian was very dedicated to studying God's word and developing great spiritual habits; but now that Christian is coasting. We need to be reminded that God commands spiritual growth (Ephesians 4:14-16; Hebrews 5:12:14;). He calls for us to "increase in knowledge" (Colossians 1:9-10), to "grow in respect to salvation" as well as to grow in "grace and knowledge" (2 Peter 2:1-2; 3:18). We must not become spiritually stagnant.

There is no doubt that Einstein was a lifelong learner. He understood that there was always room to grow and more to learn. Similarly, Paul, late in his life, even though his knowledge and spirituality were incredible, asked for Timothy to bring him the books and parchments (2 Timothy 4:13). Paul wanted to keep learning.

Let's never allow ourselves to get to the point where we think we have learned and grown enough spiritually.

--Author unknown (via Mt. Carmel/Athens, AL)