



1. Growing Down

Ps 1:3 ..they are like a tree planted by streams of water, which yield fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither – whatever they do prospers.

Ps 92:12 The righteous will flourish like a palm tree; they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old-age, they will stay fresh and green.

Roots represent a hidden work

- a) **Roots are there to absorb water & nutrients**
- b) **Roots anchor trees for when the storms come**

The way we get nutrients to flourish and grow will be different for each one of us because we are all unique persons. Foster identifies 6 main “types” of spiritual discipline.

eg 1. Creation 2. Silence 3. Study 4. Fellowship 5. Worship 6. Service

We need to persevere in that area which suits us, but also explore ways of growth that we find difficult. We need to keep our spiritual disciplines fresh.

2. Growing Up

Mark 4: 28 All by itself the soil produces corn – first the stalk then the ear, then the full grain.

Phil 2: 12-13 ...continue to work out your salvation with fear & trembling for God is at work in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

a) Flourishing is God’s work in you

“Flourishing begins with your spirit being empowered by God’s Spirit”

b) Flourishing is God’s unique work – for the unique me.

‘When you flourish you become more you, you become holier...you become you-ier’

NB Beware of unhelpful pressures and expectations from others and yourself.

3. Growing Out

Mat 13:32 Though - the mustard seed – is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches

a) Flourishing trees “serve” others and are a joy to all.

The parable of the mustard seed tells us that when we flourish the outsider finds a home with us. (“birds of the air” are the Gentile outsiders)

Questions

1. At what moments in your life do you feel most “human” & you are most “flourishing”?
2. How has God shaped you in the way you learn and grow? What “disciplines” do you find hard?
3. What expectations and pressures (from others & yourself) have made you the person you don’t want to be? What would you look like if you were flourishing the way God made you?