

“We Need Pruning!”

I recently learned a very valuable lesson in horticulture; when I moved into my current home, there was virtually no landscaping, so I set out to remedy that problem. Over the years I have planted hundreds of plants and shrubs, usually with supervision and help from my wife, who had a green thumb. So I went to a local nursery and purchased about a dozen Nandina plants and maybe a dozen and a half 1 gallon Gardenia Button plants.

After less than a year, the gardenias just wouldn't grow and so I yanked them out and replaced them with 2 gallon ones - much better, until this year. One plant died outright, and the others were in various stages of dying (It seems they do NOT like direct sun and my sandy soil). So I took some pictures of them and returned to the nursery, intent on getting another species. The nursery lady looked at my pictures, blew them up and said “prune them!”

So I came home and of course my first move was to “Google” how to prune gardenias, and after watching a couple of videos, I sharpened my pruning shears and went to work, cutting out the dead branches and pruning back the few that were still living. And then I more or less forgot about them for about a week. It dawned on me one day that I needed to water them, and as I did you can't imagine how amazed I was when I realized each plant had dozens of blooms beginning to form - hallelujah!

Listen to John 15:1-3 *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit **He prunes** so that it will be even more fruitful.”* If you ever need to see a prime example of how this works, just stop by and look at my Gardenia Buttons, and you'll see the benefits of being pruned!

The Greek word for prune is *“Kathairo,”* which means to “...cleanse from filth, make clean, purify, remove defilement or imperfections...” No matter who we are, we all have areas that are cluttered, overgrown, and/or defiled, and therefore, we all need to be pruned! God looks at us like I look at my plants - He sees numerous “dead branches” in our lives that need to be removed, and He sees “branches” or portions of our lives that have great potential, but only if He is allowed to prune them and bring forth new growth. Want more of God? Ask Him to prune you, and just like I was, you might be amazed by the results His pruning produces! Amen!