



The Pruning Process

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The common myth is that we receive a new body every seven years as cells die and are replaced. However, stomach cells are renewed every two days or so because of acids and enzymes. Skin cells are replaced every two to three weeks. Bone cells last about ten years, and our brain cells stay with us for our entire lives. In a sense, then, we might say that our bodies are pruned, part of us remaining long-term to nurture and sustain like the trunk of a tree, and part of us severed so that life may be renewed and continue on.

If so with our bodies, are not our spirits also pruned? There is a core part of who we are that wends its way throughout our lives. Yet that “who” has rough edges in need of being smoothed; barbs need to be dulled; and certain inclinations simply need to be severed. Spouses tend to prune one another, the grace of a loving marriage. Children sometimes keep parents honest. Life events may grind down our independence and self-sufficiency. Illnesses, aging, job loss, the death of loved ones—all forcing us to recognize that we are not in control of life. We are thus pruned, forced to surrender much of what we once thought we could control.

Where is God in all of this? If God is woven into the warp and woof of all life, then all the events and rhythms of life can draw us closer to God, pruning us into goodness and fruitfulness. ●

Reflect

How have you been pruned and has this pruning led to new growth, new life?



[Jesus said,] “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit.

JOHN 15:1-2