

TRAINING FOR GUYS

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Weeds



To Adam he said, 'Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, "You must not eat from it," Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.' Genesis 3:17-19

When God pronounced that judgement on Adam, He wasn't just making a farming or gardening statement - true though it is for those occupations.

Adam and Eve had lived in the Garden of Eden, which had been unmolested by weeds and pestilences. God had protected it. But they had chosen to move outside of God's protection, and now God is saying they will have to protect the ground and keep it productive.

In the context, though, of the rest of scripture we see that the dominion God gave them of the earth reached further. One part of the call was to protect the earth with Truth, not to let in the weeds of unbelief and doubt. In order to do this, God's People need to regularly review their own position, and to declare God's Truth to those around them.

That's one of the reasons God set up an agriculturally based system of feasts for the Children of Israel. At the time of sowing, ploughing and harvesting they were reminded too of the need to sow the Word into their nation's life, and to harvest the fruit of it in

due course.

In Hosea 10:12, 13 God tells them

Sow righteousness for yourselves,
reap the fruit of unfailing love,
and break up your unploughed ground;
for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes
and showers his righteousness on you.
But you have planted wickedness, you have
reaped evil, you have eaten the fruit of
deception.

When I returned from 2 weeks holiday earlier this month I found I could not get far down my garden because of the way some plants had grown in that fortnight. Only regular, systematic work keeps them at bay.

The duty of the Church, God's people, is to do the same with lies, unbelief and Godless philosophies. If these are consistently dealt with, they cannot grow. But sadly over the past century or so, the Church has retreated from this duty and now the weeds are so prevalent they are even found within the Church itself.



When roots begin to grow into the mortar of a building's

structure, very often the only thing that can be done is to demolish part or all of the building and rebuild. The weeds that the

church have allowed in is destroying its effectiveness in the world.

How do we deal with these weeds?

For the weeds outside the Church

We need to preach (see Jonah 1:2 for example). Not condemn. Not preach at them. But preach about Jesus. Preach the Word. Describe Him. Point people to Him. The Blood of Jesus deals with untruths, sins and so forth. Instead of using the weedkiller God has prescribed, the Church has been guilty of condemning and saying “you’re not good enough”. That has no effect at all. We need to paint Jesus in His glory.

For the weeds inside the Church

We need to teach and train. 2 Corinthians 10:5 says *We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.* We need, therefore, to come back to the Word and absorb it.

What do you believe? Does it come from scripture or from the vain philosophies of the past 2 centuries? Is it more shaped by what Darwin and Marx said, or the way television portrays ‘real life’, the behaviour of people you work with, or by the Bible?

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:1

So much of what we accept does not come from the Bible. One example is in the box to the right, we’ll look at others in future editions.

Don’t be shaped by the world, but by Jesus.

The difference between weeds and flowers is the weeds are the hardest ones to pull out.

Next week I will be at *MOMENTUM* Christian Festival, so will not be producing anything for Training for Guys.

Bible Study Series
We continue our series on Ephesians ch 1:15-23

Paul reminds us of the great power God has made available to the Church

Read the passage, and go to www.tfgministries.org.uk/podcasts to join in.

One example of a weed that has infested parts of the church, especially among the younger generation, is the use of swear words. A vicar made the headlines recently for having a car sticker which alluded to a swear word on it, and justified it as there is nothing wrong with swearing.

Some people say that, since it is now so prevalent in society, even on tv and now also radio, there is absolutely no problem with it. “It helps us to identify with the people we want to reach, makes us more like them”, they say.

If you read the Old Testament you will see that the **last** thing God wanted Israel to do was to identify with the people around them. He wanted them to be distinctive and to stand out as different. He wanted them to identify with Him, not the people around them.

That is the same call that He puts on Christians. It’s often summarised as being ‘in the world, not of the world’. Colossians 3:8 says *But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.* James 3:10-12 says *Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers and sisters, can a fig-tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.*

In Revelation 1 we see Jesus, out of His mouth comes the sound of many waters. The Spring of His Words is always pure, we are called to be the same.

The voice of the ‘weed’ calls to us to be the same, to not be different, to be indistinct. But scripture is clear that we need to cut the weeds from our life. We need to be distinctive for Jesus.

This is more than just about swearing, it’s also about gossip, malice, slander and so forth. But the weed I am addressing, the one I have heard justified so often, is the one about bad language. Don’t let it pull down the building!