



# REFLECTIONS

January 29, 2023

**"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..."**

*John 15:1-2*

## Pruned

Did you ever notice that some plants in the garden require more attention; or that some places in the lawn require more care? Without extra attention, the plant may bloom a little anyway, and the grass may grow but with less color and strength. But without more attention neither of them flourishes the way God intended.

Something I read recently drew me to this passage I have ignored too often in my prayers: *I am the vine; you are the branches*. The Gardener singles out and cuts away all that does not bear fruit. And those that do bear fruit He prunes so they will bear more fruit.

Pruning season is tough. The Gardner turns the attention of his pruning shears to you and cuts away even some of your most cherished fruit bearing parts. Your soul screams out in agony. Your fingernails clutch to what you know, and your eyes fixate on what has been. You feel naked and exposed. But when the wounds heal, the Gardner reshaped who you were into more than you ever dreamed.

*For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."* (Jeremiah 29:11) The blossoms you bring to life will flourish. It's the way your life carries on—not in breath or human touch, but through fruit borne from you, soil nourished by you, and influence left from the life you lived.

*You are the light of the world,*

*Richard +*

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