



The Master's Garden

From Seed to Harvest

Bible Study Guide

A companion for churches, families, and study groups

Leonard Gentieu

How to Begin

Start With an Opening Prayer Seeking God's Guidance

As mentioned in the Foreword, this study illustrates the symbolic connection between the planting and cultivating of a garden and the work of the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. In the following targeted Scriptures and dialogue throughout the study, you will gain insight into how to better apply God's Word to your life.

Gaining an understanding of the Bible Scriptures is only half of the equation; the other half is learning how to apply that understanding to your life.

It is easy to see the similarities between the growth of a planted garden and the growth of a believer—from salvation (the planting) and the development of a new nature and walk with Christ (cultivating), through sanctification.

Through the group study, participants are empowered to engage and stay committed. There will be questions that connect Scripture to real-life application and encourage group discussion. During interactive discussion, personal experiences and examples can be shared, bringing encouragement through the content being discussed.

The study is not about “RELIGION.” It will not address a system of beliefs, practices, traditions, rituals, doctrines, or denominations. It is about drawing closer to Jesus through a personal and active relationship with Him. It is a relationship with Christ, reinforced by growth, nurturing, maturing, and connection. This study was created to initiate a relationship with Christ if one does not exist and deepen one that does exist.

With His words, “COME TO ME,” your relationship with Him will place you on a path to discover God's will and purpose for your life.

A believer may have perfect church attendance, perfect musical pitch when singing worship songs, or be able to quote Bible Scriptures, but vastly more significant is their relationship and connection with Christ.

Jesus says in Matthew 7:21–23 that not everyone who says, “Lord, Lord,” will be with Him in heaven. Many will say they prophesied in His name, cast out demons, and did many mighty works in His name. He declared to them, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.” His words confirm just how important a personal connection and relationship with Him is. If you get that right, all else falls into place!

Personal reflection time and journaling are recommended at home. The serenity and tranquility of a garden provide an ideal place to commune with the Lord. For me, my time spent communicating with Him in the garden has brought me joy, comfort, reverence, and peace, with an overwhelming sense of well-being knowing I am His.

Connect with the Author

The author of the narrative is available by phone to offer an opening prayer and words of encouragement to begin your study. Email Leonard at mastersgardenfromseedtoharvest@gmail.com to request a call or his phone number.

Chapter One: The Beginning

Session 1 of 9

Jesus Was There in the Beginning

John 1:1–3

Theme

The rough ground in Chapter One compares to the heart of mankind. It is a perfect vision of what needs to happen in us concerning our bad habits, bad thoughts, and bad choices. Just like the plants in the garden, we need pruning of our flesh, allowing the Spirit to do His work in our hearts and souls.

Remember

“Never be a prisoner of the past. It is just a lesson, not a life sentence.”

Effective Questions to Ask and Discuss

- A. How do the accompanying Scriptures relate to your life?
- B. What stands out to you in the dialogue and supporting Scriptures?
- C. What takeaways are apparent by connecting the Scriptures discussed to your daily life experiences?
- D. Do you feel challenged or discouraged by what we have read?
- E. How does personal reflection and sharing related to this study foster a deeper relationship with Christ?

Memory Verse

Luke 1:37 — “For nothing will be impossible with God.”

Chapter Two: Getting Started

Session 2 of 9

Theme

Planning to build a deck along with planting a garden compares to God planning for Jesus. How so?

What did it cost God to offer salvation to all?

What do you think your reaction would be if your life experiences and challenges were revealed to you all at once before experiencing them?

Do you believe in a master plan for your life? Where does God factor in?

Can you identify times in your life when you did not fully trust in Christ and what the results were?

Remember

“When we say that we trust Him, it should materialize in the face of adversity and difficulties.”

Memory Verse

Proverbs 16:3 — “Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.”

Apply the five questions listed in Chapter One.

Chapter Three: Breaking Ground

Session 3 of 9

Theme

How does the transformation of the barren plot of ground in this chapter compare to the transformation taking place in a believer's life as God's work is accomplished?

The building of the deck was going to be expensive, requiring skill sets and experience I lacked. Where and how can you draw on resources to grow your walk with Christ?

What role does the Holy Spirit play in God's plan for our lives?

Remember

"The Holy Spirit is the one who makes everything that Jesus did for you real in your life. He came on the day of Pentecost and remains with us to finish the work He came to do in the church."

Memory Verse

Matthew 19:26 — "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Chapter Four: Theme and Landscapes

Session 4 of 9

Theme

How have you seen your life maturing in your relationship with Christ?

What nurturing and cultivation can you identify through the work of the Holy Spirit?

Using the beautiful tones of the wind chimes as an example, in what ways do you exhibit the ongoing transformation in your life to those around you?

The metal rooster offers a joyful welcome and an imagined cheery good morning to those who pass by. As a follower of Jesus, why is demonstrating a joyful nature important?

Remember

“You may be the only representation of Christ a nonbeliever may be exposed to.”

Review Acts 1:8.

Memory Verse

Jeremiah 29:11 — “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

Chapter Five: Trees, Trees, Glorious Trees

Session 5 of 9

Theme

Can you recall a time when the Lord moved in your life when you had little faith in a positive outcome?

Remember

“Faith, by its very nature, must be tested and tried.”

As Christians, we do not lead a pain-free life or one free from trials and suffering. How does God use these times in the maturing development of our lives?

Remember

“Not all storms come to destroy your life. Some come to clear your path.”

Like turning over the soil in the garden for planting, what do you see happening in your life as your old nature is turned over, with the Lord planting a new nature in you?

Remember

“When God gives you a new beginning, it starts with an ending. Be thankful for closed doors. They often guide us to the right ones.”

Memory Verse

2 Corinthians 5:7 — *“For we walk by faith, not by sight.”*

Chapter Six: The Rose of Sharon Resides in My Rose Garden

Session 6 of 9

Theme

In the season of life where you are right now, can you identify new spiritual growth, especially if it is happening after a difficult time or when experiencing a crisis?

Remember

“If you will remain true to God, He will lead you directly through every barrier and right into the inner chamber of knowledge of Himself.”

The boundless varieties and colors of roses compare to all the “varieties” of us. What stands out the most for you in the love and spiritual nourishment Jesus provides? How do we flourish and grow?

Remember

“The Lord is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish. I should look within and remember how wonderfully He has dealt with me.”

How do believers conduct themselves during dark times and spiritual attack? What have your experiences been regarding a hedge of protection during troubled times in your life?

Remember

“When the darkness of dismay comes, endure until it is over, because out of it will come the ability to follow Jesus truly, which brings inexpressibly wonderful joy.”

Memory Verse

1 Peter 5:8 — “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

Chapter Seven: Expanding the Maturing Garden

Session 7 of 9

Theme

In what ways does your growth as a Christian mirror that which takes place with the soil preparation, seasons, watering, fertilizing, and care of the garden plants?

What difficulties have you experienced having to work through concerning maturity and discernment in your Christian walk?

Example

Periods of doubt and lack of faith.

Remember

“Beware of paying attention to or going back to what you once were when God wants you to grow into something you have never been.”

“You did not do anything to achieve your salvation, but you must do something to exhibit it.”

Memory Verse

Genesis 2:15 — “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.”

Chapter Eight: Pathways and Water Features

Session 8 of 9

Theme — Pathways

As you mature in your relationship with Christ, what steps have you been led to take to follow the Lord's path for your life?

Remember

"His pathways may not always be clear. He is watching over us, instructing and teaching us the way to go."

Read Psalm 32:8.

Rely on His promises that will allow you to navigate your life's journey with confidence and purpose.

Memory Verse

Psalm 119:105 — "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

Theme — Water Features

Is there a place where you experience the Lord's peace and spiritual connection, as referred to here in the garden? If yes, where? Explain. If no, would you consider establishing one?

Water, in the Bible, often symbolizes spiritual renewal and life. How does that relate to the act of baptism for a Christian?

Remember

"Hearing the bubbling of a fountain and the soothing sounds of cascading water evoke feelings of calmness and well-being while, at the same time, promoting an environment to draw closer to God."

Memory Verse

Acts 22:16 — "And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on His name."

Chapter Nine: The Four R's

Session 9 of 9

Rest, Reflection, Renewal, and Reverence

Theme — Rest

How can you remind yourself to rest while trusting Jesus during times of worry and trouble in your life? What examples are offered that you might follow from the Scriptures?

Remember

“Worry is like paying interest on a debt you don’t owe.”

Memory Verse

Matthew 11:28 — “Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

Genesis 2:2 — “And on the seventh day God finished His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done.”

Isaiah 40:28 — “The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary.”

The Lord rested on the seventh day, as we read in Genesis 2:2. His rest was not because He was tired or weary; He does not grow tired or weary (Isaiah 40:28). He rested to stop and enjoy what He had created. That day was made Holy. Because we are not God, we need physical rest. But we also need to learn to stop—to pause from the demands of life and take time to enjoy the beauty, stillness, and quiet peace of the garden. In doing so, we may discover that the garden is not only a place to work, but also a place to rest, reflect, and draw closer to the One who created it.

Theme — Reflection

Where and how often do you make yourself available to strengthen your relationship with Christ? Are there similarities between developing a relationship with Christ and developing a relationship with a close friend?

Why is it important to commit oneself to repentance and transformation?

Remember

“Reflection encourages individuals to contemplate their spiritual journey and God’s role in their life. It leads to greater understanding of one’s purpose and calling.”

Memory Verse

Deuteronomy 31:6 — “Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.”

Theme — Renewal

Renewal in a believer's life is not just a one-time occurrence experienced when accepting Christ. It is a continuous and transforming opportunity for you to become who God intends you to be.

What benefits and outcomes are fostered through genuine spiritual renewal?

Remember

“Spiritual renewal serves your growth and walk with the Lord. Clinging to what might have hurt you in the past only delays what is meant for you in the future.”

Let It Go

Memory Verse

Ephesians 4:22–23 — “To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds.”

Other supporting Scriptures follow at the end of this section.

Special Note on Resentment

Resentment causes a stumbling block in your Christian walk and hinders the work of the Holy Spirit. What feelings and emotions are involved that cause people to hold on to it, and what steps can a Christian take to remove it from their life?

Pride is a significant issue with humans, and believers are not immune to its effects of arrogance and lack of humility. Why do you think humility is mentioned so many times in the Scriptures as a key virtue in valuing others?

Remember

“Forgive people. Forgiveness sets you free, and letting go helps you grow.”

Memory Verse

Ephesians 4:31 — “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.”

True Repentance Can Cancel Out Resentment

Why is repentance of sin of extreme importance to the message of salvation through Christ and Christ alone? What role do works play in the gift of salvation?

Why do you think our flesh is slow and reluctant to admit the need to repent?

Remember

“Jesus hates sin in people, and Calvary is the measure of that hatred.”

Memory Verse

Luke 24:47 — “And that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”

Theme — Reverence

What attributes and actions in a believer's life should be present relating to reverence toward our God?

How do worship, obedience, and humility exhibited in your life bring glory to our Lord?

Remember

“Worship, obedience, and humility are interconnected expressions of reverence. They reflect our love, respect, and honor toward God, drawing us closer to Him and enriching our spiritual life.”

Memory Verses

Hebrews 12:28 — “Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe.”

Psalms 5:7 — “But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house. I will bow down toward your holy temple in the fear of you.”

Closing the Study

Have a few of the study participants read aloud this section of the narrative to reinforce the connection between the Lord's work in our lives and the garden metaphors.

Epilogue

Have the study group leader read this closing section to the group.

Emphasize that Christ first chose and loved us, with us acknowledging His blessing and love in return. Encourage the group to approach Him as a friend, embracing a closer connection and relationship with Him.

Direct attention to the security and joy we should exhibit in our daily walk with Him. Focus on our redemption through His mercy and grace by what took place at the cross.

Take the Group Back to the Cross

"THAT CROSS"

Point out that without Christ's submission to the will of God and His willingness not only to endure the cross but also the immense suffering He experienced there, there would be no metaphors to discuss concerning our study.

"If God can put a tree on a barren rock from a seed dropped by a bird, how much more can He work in our lives?"

How This Narrative and Study Came About

The author is an avid gardener. He embraced gardening as an activity to stay busy after relocating from California to North Carolina. Through the fellowship of a Christian mentor who encouraged him to share how his planting and cultivation of the garden showed parallels to his relationship with Christ, the narrative was developed.

The narrative was shared and discussed with a Christian friend who thought it would make a great Bible study for her ladies' group. This study is a result of that sharing and conversation.

A pastor friend mentioned to me, after reading the narrative, that he will never look at a garden in the same way he used to.

As stated in the Foreword, I pray that this study will bring blessing and inspiration, along with thanksgiving and praise, to our Lord, Jesus Christ. Further, I pray that the study will encourage an ongoing connection resulting in a deeper relationship with Christ.

Connect with the Author

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