

Clearing The Fields



James 4:1-10

When a farmer plans and prepares for the summer harvest he begins by preparing the fields. He removes the rocks and the debris. He plows, harrows and cultivates the soil. Fertilizes and cultivates the soil again and sometimes again before he finally makes the decision it is now time to plant that spring or early summer seed. The farmer has been laboring in that field for a very long period of time and now he must patiently wait for the seed to take root and grow to full harvest. He prays for adequate amounts of rain and growing conditions from God.

1. The seeds of change that God has planted in our heart and life take time to germinate, grow and mature. We have been plowed and prepared now we must give God's restoration power the necessary time to create in us an internal change into that new creation.
2. This internal change through His restoration power is a growing readiness and willingness to have God remove all that is not of Him. It is a willingness to have Him remove all our defects and shortcomings we have carried throughout our life, while in active addiction, into recovery and even into our rebirth in Christ Jesus.
3. You may feel this is going to be an easy task, but many of our defects and shortcomings are character traits that we have depended on for survival throughout life. *They have become survival techniques.*
4. To clear our fields so a new and bountiful harvest can come forth means letting go of more than just a shortcoming or defect of character; it means letting go and moving on from an old way of life.

1 Peter 1:13-14 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

Do I need to clear my field of any of the following and all too familiar defects of character?

- a. Pride: Conceit. Our own unacceptable behavior or unacceptable treatment of others. Arrogance.
- b. Greed or selfishness. Never having enough for our self and always taking from others. Using of others to satisfy or fill our personals needs or greed.
- c. Lust, Lechery, intense indulgence of inappropriate sexual activity or above normal sexual desire.
- d. Dishonesty: Lying, stealing, conning, manipulation of others. Deceitfulness. Disposition to defraud or deceive another; to justify our behavior by explaining ourselves dishonestly.
- e. Gluttony: Abnormal and distorted appetites, overwhelming need for possessions, excessive eating, drinking or drugging.
- f. Envy: Jealousy, painful or resentful longing for an advantage or benefit enjoyed by another.
- g. Laziness: Not inclined to activity or exertion, not energetic or vigorous, distinct avoidance of responsibility.
- h. Anger, bitterness, self-centeredness, resentments, control issues, irresponsibility; impatience, Etc.

1 Cor 3:1-3 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

1. The character defects we carry into our relationship with God and into recovery will continue to plague our progress and our relationships with others because they are a familiar, they have become our comfort zone and they have become the negative part of our whole being.
2. Like our compulsion to use, defects of character grow progressively worse with time so it is useless to think about clinging onto a defect and keeping it *"In Check."*
3. It is like telling yourself; "I will only drink a beer or smoke a little pot instead of shooting dope or smoking some crack." *Won't work!* These defects have marred our past and if they are not removed they will by all means threaten our future.
4. We cannot, of course, be totally free from defects: *"No human is perfect."* But understand that however much God may want to free us from them, He is a respecter of person's and has given us, *"Free Will"* so He does nothing until we are *"Entirely Ready!"*
5. Many of us are apprehensive about God removing those weeds from our garden. We may pray, *"Make Me Pure Lord, But Not Quite Yet."* Or we may say, *"I'm not quite ready to let go of that particular one yet, Lord."* We cling to those defects for the same reason we clung onto our compulsion to use. Defects of character may help us to cope and make it through the day because; *"We have never learned God's way."*

Deut 6:3-4 Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. 4Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

1. Some cling to their defects or shortcomings because they have been a comforting coping mechanism or familiar tool, and with them some feel they are better equipped to deal with their surroundings.
2. Ask yourself: Do I cling to my old character defects because if I don't I may loose the ability to control others or myself? *Good Question...*
3. When God delivered the Jews from slavery in Egypt, He promised them a future in a land flowing with *"Milk and Honey"* but while traveling in the wilderness the Jews lost faith in God and became fearful about loosing control of their future. *Ask yourself, "What kind of future is back there"*
4. Rather than risk the unknown and all the discomforts of getting there, they wanted only to return to bondage in Egypt. Why? *Because it was familiar to them and they somehow felt safe rather than face the unknown. .*
5. There is also a Promised Land of *"Milk and Honey"* waiting for us. But, to get to it we need to trust in God, believe in His restoration power and find the courage to leave the familiarity of our dysfunctional life, lifestyle and its character defects behind.

Matt 17:20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

1. Even the smallest beginning is acceptable in the eyes of God and nothing is impossible for us because His Word states: *Phil 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*
2. In faith we must prepare, plow, harrow, cultivate, fertilize the soil again, again and again before growing conditions are right and the seedlings can take root and blossom.
3. When we have done all the above and planted the seeds of *"Willingness"* we need to look for and protect those tiny sprouts, otherwise the weeds of *"Self-Will"* will come back and overrun our fields.

4. The seedlings of “*Willingness*” can respond quickly to God’s power and our willingness to have Him remove our defects and shortcomings. But, remember also that those seedlings will quickly wilt and wither away with the heat and drought that separates us from God called: “*Satan*” and “*Self-Will.*”

Jer 4:3-4 For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns. 4Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.

1. To avoid the terrible disaster coming upon them, the people of Judah had to break up their fallow ground and not sow or be sown among the weeds. They had to undergo a moral change by committing themselves to God’s truth, justice and righteousness.
2. Today, we too are subject to those same truths. We must be open to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, repent of our defects, shortcomings and sins. We must ask God to break up the hardened soil of our hearts, which must be removed as surely as the foreskin was removed in physical circumcision.
3. We learned to lie and manipulate in order to have our needs met. We learned to lie to protect ourselves, *or so we thought...* We learned to hide our emotions in defense against possible overwhelming pain. Those very same character defects that became our means of survival became our: “*Tools of Control and Downfall!*”
4. Those tools were our way of controlling our environment, minimizing our threats and taking care of self. But, by breaking up the fallow ground we are seeking and asking God to remove those undesirable parts of our self that began innocently years ago.
5. Ask God to clear your field and plant the seeds of willingness in your heart. *Ask Him to transform you into that new creation in Christ Jesus.*