



Have you ever hired a professional to prune a tree in your yard? Dave and I hire someone to do that for us. There are times when he cuts the branches back so far that I've said to him, "There is nothing left. You have totally destroyed our tree!" But he says, "You just watch and see." And sure enough, before long the tree is much better looking than it was before.

Just like trees need pruning from time to time to remove dead branches or areas where there is overgrowth, you and I need to be pruned or reshaped at different times in different areas of our lives. We may not enjoy the pruning process, but when it's over, we're much better off than we were before.

You see, God wants us to be at our very best—spiritually, emotionally and physically.

John 15:2 (AMPC) says, "Any branch in Me that does not bear fruit [that stops bearing] He cuts away (trims off, takes away); and He cleanses and repeatedly prunes every branch that continues to bear fruit, to make it bear more and

Let go of the dead stuff in your life

richer and more excellent fruit."

It's good for us to stop and evaluate our lives sometimes and ask God to show us if there are things that need to be cut off because they are hindering our growth in our relationship with Him. Ask yourself: Am I dragging around "dead branches" in my life?

Maybe it's a bad relationship, an old wound from your past, or a negative attitude that keeps you from enjoying life to the fullest.

It would be nice if we could see what God sees and say, "Yes, God. Let's get rid of that dead branch." But many times we're too afraid to give up what we know for something new that we just can't see or understand.

The truth is you can be miserable dragging those dead things around or you can go through the pain of letting God "prune" them away. Even though it's uncomfortable, the best thing you can do is let God prune you, because after the hard part is over, you will see some amazing results!

God doesn't want to see you struggle. He loves you so much that He will never give up on you. As we allow Him to speak

into our lives, He teaches and trains us to be kind and gentle, peaceful and patient, loving and forgiving like Him. But we cannot develop that "fruit" on our own.

John 15:4 (AMPC) says, "Just as no branch can bear fruit of itself without abiding in (being vitally united to) the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you abide in Me."

In other words, we need to spend time with God.

Our relationship with God is about much more than going to church on Sunday and reading the Word as a religious duty. He wants a personal relationship with each of us.

When we stay connected to God through meaningful Bible study and prayer, we're abiding in Jesus. God wants us to be so rooted and grounded in His love that nothing can shake us—so we're able to bear good fruit in even the hardest, most difficult seasons of life.

God has a good plan for your life. He wants to take you to the next level in your relationship with Him, but there are some things that He wants you to leave behind — past hurts, insecurities, or anything you look to for a sense of security other than God Himself.

Spiritual evolution topic at FUUF on Feb. 5

Rev. Dr. Marcia Pearce will lead the worship service this Sunday, Feb. 5th at the Florence Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. The service is from 10 to 11 a.m. and the topic is Spiritual Evolution.

Evolution is a principal which expresses in every form of life. It is also the time and process through which our spirituality unfolds.

"It seems as though there is an irresistible pressure, always seeking a greater expression of good through us," says Pearce.

Is it possible for us to deliberately open our minds to a good much greater and better?

"Yes," says Pearce, "If we would only consider the concept of a much greater God."

The UU Fellowship is located at 87738 Highway 101 at Heceta Beach Road and is wheelchair accessible. Each service concludes with refreshments and a dialogue circle to explore the questions that come up during each service.

Call 541-997-2840 with any questions or concerns.

Free nine-week series to discuss life of Jesus

A weekly New Testament seminar began Thursday and will continue each Thursday until March 9.

The class will include The Life of Jesus the Messiah as a Jew, both his ministry and early life.

Bibles will be provided and class discussion will be encouraged.

The public is invited to this free course.

"The life of Christ is a controversial topic," said instructor Joel Marks. "These seminars will give depth and meaning to understanding the life of Jesus."

Marks has done post-graduate work in health science,



COURTESY PHOTO

Joel Marks speaks at the opening seminar Thursday night on the life of Jesus.

public administration and was an Adjunct Professor of

American History at Southern Oregon University for the

Osher Long Life Institute program.

The next seminar is Thursday, Feb. 19, at the LDS Church at corner of Munsel Lake and North Fork roads.

Seminars are from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

For more information, call Marks at 541-840-0620.

Spirituali-tea to discuss importance of Abraham

On Monday, Feb. 6, at 6:30 p.m., everyone is invited to join a group of friends from varied spiritual paths to discuss Abraham.

Abraham is primarily a revered ancestor or patriarch to whom God made several promises: chiefly, that he would have numberless descendants, who would receive the land of Canaan.

According to Jewish tradition, Abraham was the first post-Flood prophet to reject idolatry through rational analysis, although Shem and

Eber carried on the tradition from Noah.

Please bring information you may have about this early time in the Jewish tradition.

The gathering will end at 8 p.m. with prayers for the requests left in the Prayer Pole in the garden of the Florence Playhouse and those shared by the group.

The meeting is held at the Heintz home, located at 875 Seventh St.

For more information call Suzanne Mann-Heintz at 541 590-0779.

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