

## ELR 2017, Notes Lesson 1: Roots

Roots are AMAZING!! They aren't much to look at, but they do awesome work!!

We, as humans, talk about roots and having roots, but what does it mean to have roots?

Well, physically speaking, roots are for stability and nutrition.

\*\*\*\*For trees, it is obvious what the purpose of roots is, but what about for us? We need to be anchored (rooted) in the One, who made us, who gives us life, who knows everything, who always cares, who holds us in His hand and even knows how many hairs we have. Our existence has always depended on Him, that is why the world is falling apart. No real roots.

For the physical needs, we also need stability (to be rooted) in the form of a 'family' or 'clan' to give us a sense of belonging, to keep us from blowing any which way the wind goes, to hold us accountable, and to teach us knowledge of old, so we can know who we are.

The soil compaction levels must be low enough to allow root penetration. Soil compaction is how hard the soil around the roots is, how compact, how dense.

This means to us, that we have to guard our surroundings: places we go and more importantly, people with whom we spend our time, so our 'soil' helps us to be rooted *where* we need to be and *how deeply rooted*, we need to be...

It would be a good exercise to take some time to reflect on your soil. Are you in a place that helps you to be rooted in your faith? Are you surrounding yourself with people that help you stay rooted in our Lord? Take an honest look at how you can improve your soil.

Have you ever thought about how strong roots are? Ever think about the changes in their surroundings roots can cause?\*\*\*\*\*

Spiritually

Being spiritually rooted is talked about A LOT in the Bible. Let's look at a few verses together:

\*\*\*\*Jeremiah 17:7-8 **Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.**

What picture does this print in your head? How does that fit with your faith? What is the heat? What does it mean to remain green? What does it mean to be unfearful in the year of drought? Am I bearing fruit in the year of drought?

Also, ask yourself if you are helping others (not just your kids, but your sisters at church) by being the soil that helps them stay deeply rooted. How do we do this?

If you need help to regain your roots or to stay rooted, who can you ask?

I am hoping you know you are surrounded right now by sisters you can ask.

\*\*\*\*Ephesians 3:16-19 **That according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in**

**your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**

Wow!! I want this!! What can I worry about with this in mind?

What does it look like to be spiritually rooted in God? \*\*\*\*

Psalm 1:3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

\*\*\*\*Colossians 2:6-7 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

Here we see that it's a command, a choice, and it can be learned.

\*\*\*\*1 Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

This doesn't happen without roots in Him.

Let's talk about the book of Daniel (and there are quite a few great examples in the Word) and some people rooted in God (and there are quite a few great examples in the Word):

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were stolen from their homeland and taken to Babylon.

Their names were changed to Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.

They had to serve the king.

They had to eat the king's food, but negotiated to be able to eat cleaner food.

God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom.

God gave Daniel the understanding in all visions and dreams.

When someone couldn't do his job (interpreting King's dreams), they were also on the kill list.

**Daniel asked the king for time, because he KNEW God could tell him the dream and its meaning.**

**Daniel went straight to God for help with this impossible task.**

**When God gave him the answer, he went straight to God to praise Him.**

They were promoted and lived happily ever after, right???

No, the king praised our God and they were promoted...

King makes statue and statute. (90 ft. high, 9 ft. wide, almost 27.5 meters high, 2.74 meters wide)

Statute: Everyone must bow down to the statue.

**3 brave young men refused to bow down, knowing a death sentence was in their near future.\*\*\*\***

When asked why they didn't bow down, these are the words they gave and lived by, `O, Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up. \*\*\*\*

Off to the fiery furnace, they went and were met by someone awesome, someone who had their backs!!! Someone who saved them from the fire and from the smoke and their bindings!!\*\*\*\*

**\*\*\*\*Daniel ends up in the lions' den\* because he wouldn't/couldn't stop praying to God. He didn't hide his devotion.\*\*\*\***

He knew what would/could happen. What happened in the morning? The king praised God, then changed the law to honor our great God!!

\*\*\*\*Have you ever thought about the changes in your surroundings you can cause when you are spiritually rooted? The world wants to change us. Really it's satan who wants to change us. He wants us to conform, to follow trends, to be sucked into the world's ways, TO BE ROOTED IN him. We can be the change instead of being changed. You might crack sidewalks!!!\*\*\*\*

Being short-rooted or having no roots means that there is no stability, no way to be nourished, and no way to hydrate.

And what does it look like to be shallow-rooted or rooted in something other than God? Here are a things the Bible says:

\*\*\*\*Mark 4:6 And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away.

Matthew 13:5-6, 20-21 Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away.

But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.

We know this parable. Do we ever look at ourselves when we read it? Do my roots go deep enough in Christ, that when life happens badly, I KNOW that my Master, my Father, my Savior, my Creator has my back?

\*\*\*\*Hebrews 12:15 See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled. This one is confronting me. It is sometimes easy to let that root of bitterness take its place, when someone is unkind, unchristian, **truthful**, of a different opinion of mine, when my health continues to deteriorate, when things aren't going my way. The list could go on. We all have our burdens, but do we look at those burdens and thank God for them? Wow!! That is hard to do!!

**Jeremiah 17:5-6 `Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord. For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when good comes, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land which is not inhabited.'**

I am a self-reflector. Not always to my advantage, because it can hold me back. But we need to self-reflect with God's help to learn and grow. So here are a few of the ways shallow-rooted looks to me:

I think it means forgetting who put me here in this place to accomplish His purpose.

I think it means forgetting that when it seems hopeless, IT IS NOT.

I think it means leaving my Bible on the shelf or in my church bag.

I think it means that the closest thing to quiet time with the Father is the prayer time before the meal.

I think it means that when I have a problem, it gets talked about with everyone **before** I pray to God about it.

I think it means that my new years' resolutions have everything to do with my outward appearance, my organization skills and my social life, and **little** to do with bringing glory to Him.

What does it mean to you? How does that look in your Christian walk?

What does the Bible say about this?

Proverbs 13:20 `He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm.'

Proverbs 8:11-12 `For wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her. "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and I find knowledge and discretion.'

Colossians 2:8 `See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.'

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

So again, how does it look to be deeply rooted in Him?

- No fear of future (Jeremiah 17:17-18)
- Fruit bearing (Jeremiah 17:18)
- No fear of surroundings (Jeremiah 17:17-18)
- Prosperous (Psalm 1:3)
- Filled with the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:16-19)
- `He will deliver us from your hand, o king. But if not...' this **attitude** (Daniel 3:18)

And what do we not want to be like, because our roots are shallow?

- Wither away (from walking with God) Matthew 13:5-6
- Not be able to see when good comes Jeremiah 17:5-6
- Suffer harm Proverbs 13:20
- Weak and instable in faith Jeremiah 17:9

How can I become or stay rooted in God?

Having a deep relationship with your Creator is the key, but how do we get there?

**Pray!!!** Ask Him to help you understand Him more, to feel His presence in you day, to make room in your busy, demanding day to speak with him.

**Make it a priority.** Decide to take the steps to build that relationship. It can't be a one-sided affair. He is there. Always. He wants us to focus on what's in front of us.

Put down the facebook and open the Book.

Put down the facetime and have some real time with Him in prayer.

Stop planning so many good works and spend time with HIM. Don't get me wrong. Good works are right, but sometimes, we, (I) get so bogged down in good works, I forget my purpose. Making Him happy, getting closer to Him, shining His light. These are difficult to do, if I am running and stressing from one activity to another.

**Make worship mean something.** We have very little appointed time for worship. Make those Sunday morning, Sunday evenings, Wednesday evening and all the other moments of worship really count. He deserves our worship, He demands our devotion and we grow closer to Him when we let go and really WORSHIP.

**Compare Him to my other relationships:** do I give Him the same (more) priority as I do other relationships or activities?

Getting grounded in His Word is essential for the deeper relationship with Him and with His people. It is essential to grow, to become more like Him, to rid ourselves of what is wrong. So how do we that?

**Pray!** Ask Him who wrote the Book to help you understand it. Ask Him to put the desire in your heart to long for His words, to feel the soothing it brings when you bathe your soul in His Holy Word. He will do it!!!!!!!!!!!!

**Know that the Bible is the greatest self-help book ever written.** And we can know it is inspired to HELP. Did you catch that? I have a lot of books in my house. I love books. Self-help books are very popular, because we are all searching for something (God). We have in our possession the only self-help book that we can be certain is inspired by God to help. I cannot say that about the other self-help books. **The Bible is our blueprint for pleasing God.** This should be our number one goal. This should be our number one goal.

**Make a commitment to study His word.** Start today. Build it up.

**Find a creative way to study.** Have you ever done scripture writing? I am in the baby steps of it, but really enjoy what it brings to me.

You spend 15-30 minutes a day, writing God's word. Some people do this in a fancy journal with fancy handwriting. I wish I were more like that, because I think it's lovely, but at 47 years old, I am admitting somethings about myself. I won't keep that up, so I keep it simple. ☺ There are lists online that people, who are better than I, have made. They make monthly lists, so you can write those scriptures. They are great.

I have made you a list and left some blanks for other scriptures that are used this weekend. You can use this list to try scripture writing, if you'd like, but it is not the only answer to getting deeper in His Word. It is just a help-middle.

**Getting grounded in our spiritual family is not always as easy;** sometimes it's easier than getting deep in His Word or building that relationship deeper with Him. So how do I do this?

- **Pray!!!** Ask Him who knows you and knows your brothers and sisters in Christ, how to build those relationships. He wants to help!!

- **Spend time with your church family.** How are some ways to spend time with our church family?
  - Go to church, visit afterwards, come 10-15 minutes before church to visit
  - Ask someone over for thee, dinner, a walk, to pray
  - Call someone, not just send a mail or a message. (those are good, too, but miss depth)
  - Pray with your sisters. Prayer evenings at church, prayer phone calls, etc. are all great ways to get bonded with our family.
  - Plan a fun activity with the church: game night, youth weekends, dinner together--just because.
- **Make it a priority.** We all know that when something is important to us, we work harder on it. This should be a priority.
- **Grow a work together.** I have been enjoying my sisters so much in the organization and doing of the coffee morning for the women who are refugees. I love getting to know them better and spending time with them in a different way.
- **Remember, that even though you didn't pick your brothers and sisters out, God did.** We need to love and accept the differences, knowing that God has us together for His reasons. Just because someone isn't our type, doesn't get us off the hook. ☺ **Maybe that is just the challenge God is giving you...**

I want to close with this thought from Corrie ten Boom (author of [The Hiding Place](#))(survivor of a WW2 work camp). She showed this picture of the embroidery, showing that this is how we feel about life and its messes. Then she compares the underside to the right side, that this is what God sees, plans, wills. We can hold on to this image when our struggles seem overwhelming and impossible.

Let's pray.