



Friends
GARDEN PARTY
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The Weeds of Life

By Tammy Borden ©

I hate weeds, which means I have a lot to hate about my lawn and my gardens. But I have vowed to keep fighting despite what seems like a losing battle. Let's face it; it's tough keeping weeds out of our garden. It requires lots of getting down on your hands and knees, working the soil, pulling, digging, and at times using some form of concoction to finally get rid of them. It's hard work.

I swear there can be times when I'm strolling through my gardens and I may see a small weed, and I think to myself, "Oh, I'll get that tomorrow." Well, tomorrow comes, and behold, it had grown into something resembling a weed from the Little Shop of Horrors. I'm amazed at how quickly weeds can take over.

There are other times, especially in early spring, when I go to pull a weed and catch myself, realizing I was just about to pull out that expensive perennial I had planted the fall before. I can honestly say I have carefully tended a plant that I thought was a flower, only to realize in July that I had been carefully watering and nurturing a clump of wild goldenrod.

There are weeds in life too. And like in the garden, it requires a lot of hard work identifying them and getting them out. They start out unassuming and sometimes unrecognizable from the good things in our lives. Weeds can be like that. Sometimes weeds in our lives start out small and subtle... like a habit, that left unattended, can grow into a full blown uncontrollable addiction. Or a grudge against someone that, unchecked, can grow into an obsession of hatred.

When I was in middle school I was bullied and made fun of by a classmate. She spread nasty rumors about me. She would meet me after school to beat me up. In gym class she would tease me and tell me how ugly I was. Slowly my self image, my value, worth and dignity faded away. I carried those wounds with me for years. My grudge against her was a weed that had eventually grown into hatred that almost destroyed me, and the roots went deep. But the day came when I had to face my sin of hatred towards her and forgive... even though she didn't ask for it. Even though she didn't try to make up for what she did. The unforgiveness and hatred that I held onto was hurting me more than the pains I experienced in my childhood. By holding on to my hatred, I was still allowing her to dictate my life and determine my value, despite years having passed since I'd seen her.

I wish I had known as a school girl about the principles of weeding: get them when they're small, and get the whole root. If you've ever tried to pull a dandelion you know that it has a really deep tap root. And if you just chop off the leaves and those yellow flowers, your lawn will look pretty nice for a few days. But eventually that weed will come back bigger and stronger than ever. In our lives if we just clean up the outward appearance so that it looks good from the outside, but don't get the root, the weeds of life will overtake us and only get stronger and more difficult to get rid of.

There's another principle to removing weeds. Have you ever tried pulling weeds during a dry spell? Now compare that to pulling weeds after a good dousing rain. There's a big difference, isn't there? When the earth is nourished and softened, it's easier to pull weeds. But I have known some people who have allowed pain, heartache and trials to harden their hearts like cement. As a result, the weeds of life that have grown through the cracks have a stronghold that won't let go. I long for them to allow their hearts to be open, to risk having the gentle rain of love penetrate their soul to soften the grip.

Our weeds in life need to be treated the same as weeds in a garden. Admittedly, I've toiled and worked to remove the deeply rooted weeds of my life, and yes, a lot of time was spent on my knees. And it's a continual process. Weeds keep trying to spring up and rob the joy of life. But as with my garden, I won't give up the battle. I'll continue to learn to identify them and get them when they're small, and continue to experience the joy that working in the garden can bring. And yes, there is joy in seeing God work in our lives too, even though the process of pulling the weeds of life can sometimes be painful.