



Weeding

★ BIBLE STUDY GUIDE ★

You are Responsible for your Own Garden

God created Adam and Eve and placed them in the garden. Adam was given the responsibility of caring for it. He was the keeper of the garden.

In the same way, you are the keeper of your own garden - your heart and your life. God has given you the resources you need: good soil, good seed, water, wisdom and guidance. But what you do with those resources is your choice. You can care for your garden, or you can neglect it.

Sometimes bad seeds are blown in by the wind. Sometimes other people scatter harmful seeds into your garden or trample on the flowers you have carefully grown. Even then, the responsibility for tending your garden remains yours. Other people may have caused damage, but they are not responsible for maintaining the condition of your heart.

At times, you may also sow bad seeds yourself without fully realising it. In anger, hurt or frustration, you may scatter weeds into your own garden through your words, choices or attitudes.

Sometimes weeds are planted through a lack of knowledge, wisdom or guidance. These things happen, but you are never without the opportunity to begin restoring your garden. It is always better to prevent weeds from taking root than to struggle later to stop them from spreading.

There will also be storms. Hail may tear the leaves, break the flowers and leave the garden looking damaged and bare. When that happens, you must return to the garden and begin the work of restoration. Pick up the spade and the fork. Remove what is harmful, repair what has been damaged and nurture what is still alive.

Other people may come alongside you. They may encourage you, help you pull weeds or plant something beautiful. Their support can be a gift, but it is not their responsibility to fix or maintain your garden for you.

If you are unwilling to care for your own garden, it will not remain healthy and well kept. Someone may plant beautiful flowers for you out of the goodness of their heart, but if you continue to neglect them through unwillingness or laziness, they will eventually wither.

You are responsible for the condition of your own heart.

Take time to look carefully at the garden of your heart. Ask God to reveal its true condition to you.

Perhaps a fierce storm has passed through and left parts of your garden damaged, overgrown or almost destroyed. You may not yet have had the strength or courage to face the mess and begin restoring it, but you do not have to do the work alone. Ask God to help you rebuild, replant and restore your beautiful garden.

God is always ready to help when you ask Him and when you are willing to begin.

A healthy garden needs regular attention. Walk through it often. Look closely for weeds, and when you find them, pull them out by the roots before they have a chance to spread and multiply.

Ask God to show you any harmful attitudes, habits, thoughts or wounds that have begun to take root.

Do not neglect this garden.
It is far too precious.

Tending to your Garden

A garden cannot thrive without water and nourishment. In the same way, there are things we need to do that allow God to strengthen and refresh the garden of our hearts.

Obedience, prayer, praise and spending time in His presence all help to keep our hearts healthy and growing.

We also need to be mindful of the seeds we sow. Sow kindness, goodness, patience and love into your own heart. Speak to yourself with grace, make choices that bring life, and nurture what is good.

These same seeds can also be sown into the lives of others. A kind word, a loving action or a thoughtful response can become something beautiful in another person's garden.



SOWING AND REAPING

What you sow, you will reap



- ✿ If you plant **kindness**, you will reap **friendship**
- ✿ If you plant **compassion**, you will reap **connection**



- ✿ If you plant **diligence**, you will reap **fruitfulness**
- ✿ If you plant **patience**, you will reap **growth**



- ✿ If you plant **honesty**, you will reap **trust**
- ✿ If you plant **humility**, you will reap **honor**



- ✿ If you plant **consideration**, you will reap **harmony**
- ✿ If you plant **forgiveness**, you will reap **reconciliation**



- ✿ If you plant **perseverance**, you will reap **victory**
- ✿ If you plant **faith in Christ**, you will reap **miracles**



The principle remains simple: what you sow, you will reap.

Weeding

Tending to your garden means pulling out the weeds. Very often, this involves forgiveness and the uprooting of our own insecurities. It means exposing the lies that have been sown into your garden and replacing them with God's truth about who you are.

First, we need to inspect the garden. We need to search carefully for weeds, identify them, and pull them out—root and all. This can only be done with the help of the Holy Spirit.

We may recognise a weed by its leaves, blossoms, or even by the bitter and poisonous fruit it produces. Ideally, we want to recognise the weed before it begins to blossom and bear fruit. This means we need to inspect our gardens regularly, so that weeds do not have the opportunity to mature and develop a deep and well-established root systems.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart;

Try me, and know my anxieties;

And see if there is any wicked way in me,

And lead me in the way everlasting.”

P S A L M 1 3 9 : 2 3 – 2 4

Searching for weeds in your garden means asking God to search your heart and reveal anything that should not be there. Through His Spirit, He will help you recognise the weeds, uncover their roots, and show you what needs to be removed.

The beautiful thing is that Holy Spirit does this with absolute gentle care. His intention is to gently convict you – not accuse and hurt you.

Some weeds have already grown into large, strong shrubs in our gardens. When this happens, there is obvious competition for space, nourishment and light. For the weed to take over, it must weaken and eventually destroy the tree. That is the purpose of the weed.

In the same way, Satan seeks to sow weeds into our gardens in order to damage and destroy what God is growing in us. He is also satisfied if he can simply hinder our growth and prevent us from bearing fruit. A fruitful life brings glory to God, blesses others and reveals the work of Christ within us.

If the roots of a tree are unable to grow deeply into rich soil, the tree will not stand firm. When the first strong storm comes, it may be uprooted. The enemy also attacks the roots because he knows that when the roots are damaged, the whole tree becomes weak. If the roots die, the tree will eventually wither, die and fall.

Why does Satan seek to do this? Because of his hatred for God. That hatred is connected to something deeper: jealousy. Jealousy carries destruction with it. Therefore, Satan seeks to damage anything that reflects God's character, purpose and glory.

But remember: through Christ, God has given us everything we need to care for our gardens and overcome the attacks of the enemy. We are not alone, even when it feels that way.

In those difficult seasons, we need to dig a little deeper. We must make use of the tools and resources God has given us—His Word, prayer, truth, faith, obedience and the help of the Holy Spirit—to strengthen our roots and restore our gardens.

Continuously fill your mind with what is good and true—with wholesome thoughts, God's Word and His truth. These seeds will settle in your heart, take root and grow into strong, healthy trees.

Think of yourself as a field that has been ploughed and prepared for planting. It is your responsibility to pay attention to the seeds being sown into that soil and to take authority over anything that should not be allowed to grow there.

Seeds enter our hearts through our gates, especially through what we see and hear. This is why we need to guard our eyes and ears carefully. We must be mindful of what we allow into our hearts, so that harmful seeds do not take root and grow into weeds in the garden of our hearts.

Let's look at some of these destructive weeds in our heart's garden:



Offence

In the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, an offence is “something that outrages the senses.”

Those who have been offended may feel hurt, wounded, upset, disappointed, irritated or angry.

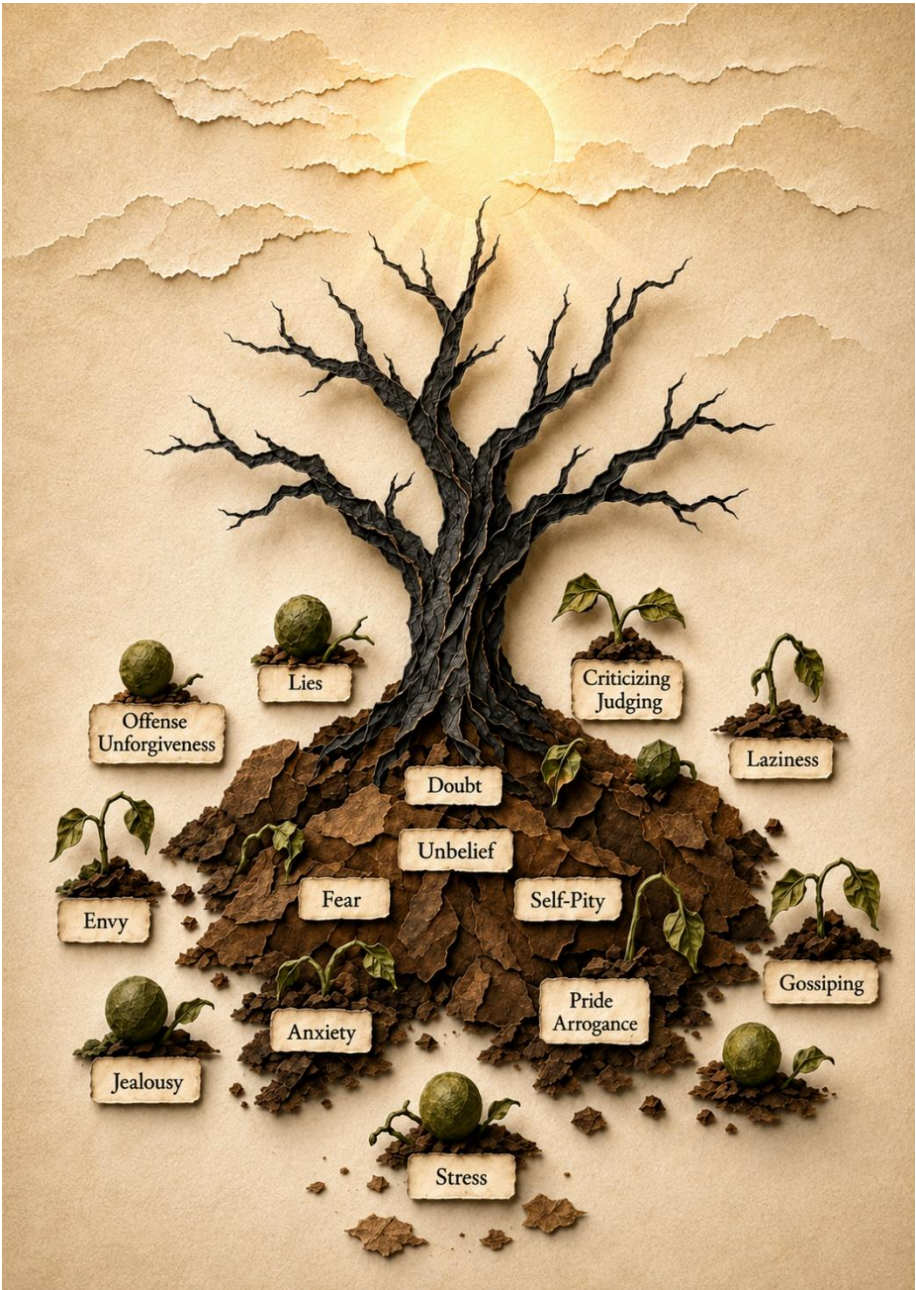
It is unfortunate that offences occur, but the Bible tells us that when we keep our focus on God and His Word, He can establish a deep peace in our hearts that we become less vulnerable to offence.

“Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.”

P S A L M 119:165

Offensive words and actions may still come our way, but we do not have to allow them to take root in our hearts.

The Lord is our faithful source of peace in every circumstance of life.



— Jesus Warns of Offences

Then He said to the disciples, “It is impossible that no offences should come, but woe to him through whom they do come!”

LUKE 17:1

Look carefully at the word: impossible.

This means that offences will come. From time to time, we will all face hurtful words, unfair treatment, misunderstandings or disappointment. Because of this, we need to prepare our hearts to deal with offence as soon as it appears. If we do not, we give that weed time and space to take root and spread through the garden of our hearts.

“A man’s wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offence.”

PROVERBS 19:11

I have a choice.

We often hear someone’s words, jump to a conclusion, and choose to take offence. But we can also choose to look beyond those words and refuse to receive them with an offended heart. We need to learn to listen objectively and ask:

What is driving this person’s words?

Do they have a valid point?

Are they speaking from a place of deep hurt?

Is there something they need that I am not giving?

The responsibility is mine to stop those words from taking root in my heart.

When I accept this, my attitude begins to change. It takes time, and it is a process, but we need to make a start in the right direction.

“You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.”

ISAIAH 26:3

Before we begin demanding our “right” to speak or act however we please, we need to remember that we were bought at a price.

“For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

1 CORINTHIANS 6:20

We no longer belong to ourselves.

“For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.”

ROMANS 14:7

We belong to Christ, and those who are mature in the Lord should show patience, grace and consideration toward those who are more sensitive or weaker in their faith.

Paul wrote:

“We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”

ROMANS 15:1

Jesus laid down His life for us, and we are called to lay down our lives for one another.

“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

1 JOHN 3:16

People who frequently cause offence are often easily offended themselves. Why? Because giving offensive and being offended can grow from the same root: SELF.

When self is at the centre, we become focused on our own rights, feelings, expectations and desires. But when Christ is at the centre, we learn to walk in humility, patience and love.

A problem with self can often be seen in someone who is rude or inconsiderate. Their offensive behaviour may grow from a self-centred attitude that gives little thought to the feelings of others.

It also seems that offence is becoming increasingly common among believers. Christians can become offended by the smallest things. This is not God's way. As followers of Christ, we do not have the right to deliberately offend others, nor should we allow offence to take root in our own hearts.

When we are easily offended, it may reveal an area where we are still unsure of our identity in Christ.

When you truly know who you are in Him, the words and actions of others do not have the same power over you. You know the truth about yourself: that you are fearfully and wonderfully made, created in His image, and given your own unique gifts, talents and qualities.

When you take offence, pause and examine your heart. Ask yourself:

Where am I still insecure?

What did this situation touch in me?

Why did these words affect me so deeply?

Then bring those insecurities to the Lord. Ask Him to heal you, strengthen you and establish you more firmly in the truth of who you are in Christ.

In this way, even an offence can become an opportunity for healing and growth. What was meant to hurt you can be used for good, bringing greater wholeness and freedom into your life.

— The Root of Offence is Pride

*"A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city,
And contentions are like the bars of a castle."*

PROVERBS 18:19

Offence builds walls around the heart. It makes reconciliation difficult and can imprison us behind hurt, pride and self-protection.

My desire is to reach a place where my heart is no longer easily offended—a heart that is secure in Christ, quick to forgive and willing to walk in humility.

— Offence Is a Sign of Immaturity

This is another reason why we need to grow and mature in the Lord. Spiritual maturity teaches us to respond with wisdom rather than react from hurt. It helps us to let go of pride, overlook offence and choose peace.



The Unoffendable Heart

We will continue exploring and discussing the rest of the weeds in the next chapter.

Important Point:

It is important to stop peeking over the wall into another person's garden to see what weeds are growing there.

Ask yourself: Am I quick to notice and point out the weeds in the lives of my friends, my spouse, or even my parents? Instead of focusing on their gardens, tend carefully to your own. Their garden is their responsibility before God, just as yours is your responsibility.

You can sow good seeds into another person's life through love, encouragement, truth, prayer, and kindness, but you do not always need to point out every weed you see. Let the health and fruitfulness of your own garden become an example and an inspiration to them.

REFLECTION

Tending the Garden of My Heart

God has entrusted the garden of my heart to me.

Other people may have scattered harmful seeds, caused damage or brought storms into my life. I may also have planted unhealthy seeds through my own thoughts, words, attitudes or choices. Although I may not be responsible for everything that has happened to me, I am responsible for what I allow to remain and grow within my heart.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, I can inspect my garden, recognise the weeds and uncover their roots. God has not left me to do this work alone. He has given me His Word, His truth, and His Spirit. Weeds will have less opportunity to take root.

Offences will come. Hurtful words, misunderstandings and disappointment are unavoidable, but I do not have to allow offence to take root in me. I can bring my hurt to God, choose forgiveness and allow Him to heal the places that are wounded or insecure.

Spiritual maturity teaches me to respond with wisdom rather than react from hurt. As I become more secure in Christ, the words and actions of others will have less power to disturb my peace.

My heart is precious.

I will not neglect it.

I will pull out what is harmful, nurture what is good and continue sowing seeds of truth, kindness, humility, patience, forgiveness and love.

Many years ago, I had a dream in which I found myself walking through a large garden. It was not a beautiful garden. It was badly overgrown, with tall, dry, brown grass everywhere. The ground was neglected and difficult to walk through, so I had to move carefully.

As I made my way through the garden, I noticed a beautiful lemon tree in the distance. It was healthy and full of large, perfect lemons. I was drawn toward it and began making my way through the overgrowth to reach it. Yet when I looked around, I became aware of how neglected the rest of the garden was. There were weeds, pests, and even snakes hiding among the tall grass.

Later, God helped me understand the meaning of the dream. The tree was healthy, but it would not remain that way if the garden around it was not cleared, tended, and protected from weeds and pests. It was also a picture of the garden of my own heart. God was showing me that certain areas of my life needed attention.

At the same time, the tree showed me what my life could become if I took His hand and allowed Him to help me clear away what did not belong. The large, healthy lemons represented purification. God was not only revealing what

needed to be removed; He was also showing me the fruit that could grow through surrender, cleansing, and careful tending.

Pause and Reflect

Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart. Take time to consider the following questions honestly. As you work through them, be careful not to fall into the trap of blaming others for the condition of your garden.

Of course it is important to recognise what or who may have caused the damage, but do not allow your focus to remain there. Keep your attention on the work of weeding, healing, and restoring your own garden. Remember, that devastating storm was real – I did happen, but how are you going to think about it going forward?

Inspecting the Garden

What is the present condition of my heart?

Is there an area that has been neglected, damaged or overgrown?

What attitudes, thoughts, habits or wounds may have begun to take root?

Identifying the Weed

What unhealthy fruit have I noticed in my life?

Is there offence, unforgiveness, pride, jealousy, fear, insecurity, bitterness or resentment growing in my heart?

What may be the root beneath this behaviour or reaction?

Examining Offence

Is there anyone toward whom I am carrying offence?

What happened, and why did it affect me so deeply?

Did this situation touch an insecurity, unmet expectation, fear or wound within me?

Am I repeatedly rehearsing what happened?

Is there anything I need to forgive, release or bring honestly before the Lord?

Guarding the Gates

What seeds am I allowing to enter through what I see, hear and repeatedly think about?

Are these seeds producing peace and life, or are they feeding fear, anger, comparison or discontentment?



PRAYER

Father, thank You for entrusting the garden of my heart to me.

I invite You to search me and reveal anything growing within me that does not belong there. Show me not only the visible fruit, but also the roots beneath it.

Forgive me for the times I have allowed offence, pride, bitterness, fear, insecurity or unforgiveness to remain in my heart. I choose to release those who have hurt or disappointed me. Help me to forgive as You have forgiven me.

Heal the places within me that have been wounded. Remove every lie and replace it with Your truth. Teach me to guard my heart, my thoughts, my eyes and my ears.

Help me to respond with wisdom rather than react from hurt. Make me secure in who I am in Christ—quick to forgive, slow to take offence and willing to walk in humility, patience and love.

Give me the strength to pull out what is harmful, restore what has been damaged and nurture what You are growing in me.

May the garden of my heart become healthy and fruitful, bringing glory to You and blessing to those around me.

Amen

TENDING

THE GARDEN OF THE HEART

Before a seed can grow,
the soil of our hearts must be prepared.



SEEK

*Turn your heart
toward Him and
spend time in
His presence.*

- Set aside intentional time each day to be with God.
- Pray honestly and from the heart.
- Worship and praise to realign your heart with His.
- Quiet your mind and listen for His voice.



READ

*Receive God's Word
daily and open your
heart to the truth
He desires to speak.*

- Make Bible reading a daily priority.
- Read slowly and prayerfully.
- Meditate on a verse throughout the day.
- Keep His Word close—write it, speak it, and remember it.



ASK FOR UNDERSTANDING

*Pray for Holy Spirit to
open your heart and
reveal His truth and
His ways.*

- Ask Holy Spirit to teach you as you read.
- Look up words or passages you don't understand.
- Journal what God is revealing to you.
- Apply His truth to your life with a willing heart.



HUMBLE YOURSELF

*Lay down pride,
self-reliance, and
resistance. Be teachable,
repentant, and willing
to be changed by God.*

- Confess and repent of sin and anything that hardens your heart.
- Surrender your plans, opinions, and control to God.
- Receive correction with grace and a willingness to change.
- Choose obedience over comfort.

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth."

1 CORINTHIANS 3:6

