

Working in a garden can be very therapeutic. My mother loved flowers, and she helped me to love them, too. In my youth, though, I was not very enthusiastic about all of the weeding and other caretaking work. But I see now how critical that was having a beautiful garden. There is also a creative organizational effort needed to better glorify the Creator.

In working to bring others to an understanding of the grace of God through His Son Jesus Christ, I realize that I am sort of a spiritual gardener. I may not be able to get every flower I love to bloom, but it is indeed my main mission to help them do that. This principle applies to working to help people's relationships with God to grow as well.

My goal is to create an environment that enables them to see the creative beauty of God, not just in His physical creation, but in His love for the main objective of that creation – us! I cannot control the growth¹ or make the blooms look a particular way. I can't make them appear at times of my own choosing, but if I prepare the soil and provide nourishment, I know it will all occur in such a way that makes thoughtful people marvel at the beauty of life. The work is harder than pulling weeds, but so much more rewarding.

Just as flowers need the sun for energy, we need to help others perceive the glory of God, even through the clouds of struggle and suffering. That glorious energy must penetrate deep into our souls. Christ told us that He is the vine and we are the branches². In my mind I see a vine that reaches out from Him and gives us support; it weaves around us and draws us in to Him. Thanks be to God for the infusion of strength that we receive from this connection.

1. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 1 Corinthians 3:5-6.
2. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:5.