

The Season of Harvest

Lesson 2 — Nurturing Growth

Text: 1 Corinthians 3:6–8 (ESV)

“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor.”

Introduction — Continuity and Care After Sowing

Last lesson, we considered sowing — the seeds we plant through our words, choices, and small acts. This lesson explores the next season: nurturing what has been sown.

1 Corinthians 3:6–8 reminds us that God is the ultimate source of increase, but human faithfulness matters: planting and watering are real responsibilities. Today we examine how we nurture growth until God gives the increase.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the seeds You have planted in our lives. Teach us to nurture them faithfully, to water with care, and to trust Your timing for growth. May this study help us grow in patience, diligence, and active faith as we await Your increase. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Point 1 — Understanding the Role of Watering and Nurturing

Scripture Reference: 1 Corinthians 3:6–8

Context: Paul addresses a divided Corinthian church boasting about leaders. He reframes ministry as cooperative stewardship: different roles, one Lord, and God as the giver of growth. Human labor matters, yet the increase is God’s work — calling for humility and dependence.

Subpoint 1.1 — Teaching & Exposition as Water

Analysis: Clear, patient teaching is like a steady stream that keeps soil fertile. Correct explanation and contextual application of Scripture helps roots develop. Teaching translates eternal truths into practical life lessons, making the Word alive.

Why it matters: Without sound teaching, seed-shaped faith fails to take root or form lasting beliefs.

Practical Steps:

- Commit to a weekly Scripture study.
- Attend a small-group Bible study.
- Prepare brief, personal reflections on a single verse each day.

Subpoint 1.2 — Prayer as the Spiritual Irrigation

Analysis: Prayer invites the Spirit to transform knowledge into conviction and obedience. It accompanies all watering: intercessory prayer for growth and personal prayer by the believer. Prayer aligns effort with God's purposes.

Why it matters: Watering without prayer becomes technique; prayer ensures dependence on God.

Practical Steps:

- Start a "prayer-for-growth" list (3 people/areas).
- Set a short daily time to pray specifically that the Word would take root in these lives.

Subpoint 1.3 — Pastoral Care and Correction

Analysis: Nurturing sometimes requires pruning — removing what chokes growth. Loving correction, counsel, and accountability protect emerging fruit. This is an act of care, not judgmentalism.

Why it matters: Unchecked sin or hurt stunts growth; careful correction fosters deeper roots.

Practical Steps:

- Meet with one person for accountability.
- Practice loving feedback using "I" statements.
- Create a safe covenant for confidential support.

Subpoint 1.4 — Creating Habitual Rhythms

Analysis: Daily rhythms (prayer, Scripture, Sabbath, fellowship) keep soil receptive. Repeated spiritual habits shape identity and prepare the heart for growth.

Why it matters: Sporadic watering yields sporadic growth; rhythms create consistency.

Practical Steps:

- Choose 2 simple daily rhythms (10 minutes Scripture + 5 minutes prayer).
- Practice a weekly Sabbath or unplugging period.

Life Application — Whole Point:

- Form or join a weekly study group for 6 weeks.
- Start a "growth prayer" list and pray 3×/week.
- Ask a trusted mentor for one area of correction and start a 30-day accountability practice.
- Implement two daily spiritual rhythms (Scripture & short prayer).

Discussion Questions:

1. Which of the four watering practices do you most need right now?
2. Who has watered your faith meaningfully? How can you thank them or follow their example?
3. What small habit could you adopt this week to be a better "waterer" of your own or someone else's faith?

Point 2 — The Power of Patience, Persistence, and Diligence

Subpoint 2.1 — Patience in Waiting

Analysis: Patience is active waiting; continuing ministry and spiritual disciplines while trusting God's timetable. Time allows roots to deepen and character to form.

Why it matters: Impatience leads to shortcuts and weak growth.

Practical Steps:

- Schedule a 90-day patience project (long-term prayer for someone).
- Practice “sabbath-fast” from immediate fixes (social media, impulse solutions).

Subpoint 2.2 — Persistence in Small Tasks

Analysis: Small, consistent acts build character. “Compound interest” of daily spiritual disciplines produces long-term fruit.

Why it matters: Spiritual formation rewards steady persistence over instant results.

Practical Steps:

- Pick one small spiritual habit for 30 days (journaling, gratitude, short devotion).

Subpoint 2.3 — Diligence in Service and Stewardship

Analysis: Ordinary ministries (visiting, hospitality, teaching) are crucial. Diligence is recognized by God and sustains community growth.

Why it matters: Faithful unseen laborers are vital to God’s work.

Practical Steps:

- Volunteer consistently in one ministry for 6 months.

Subpoint 2.4 — Resilience through Discouragement

Analysis: Resilience continues watering during “dry” seasons. It is nurtured by perspective, community, and remembering past faithfulness.

Why it matters: Many quit during arid seasons; resilience enables deeper root formation.

Practical Steps:

- Keep a “faith log” recording answered prayers and past growth.
- Share discouragements with an accountability partner weekly.

Life Application — Whole Point:

- Design a 3-month spiritual formation plan with weekly micro-goals.
- Keep a resilience journal with 3 God-faithful memories.
- Practice patience rituals (breath prayers, waiting prayers).

Discussion Questions:

1. What area of your spiritual life needs patience and persistence now?
 2. What small daily habit can you commit to for the next 30 days?
 3. How can you embed resilience practices into your rhythms?
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Point 3 — Trusting God's Timing

Subpoint 3.1 — Sovereignty of God over Growth

Analysis: God decides when and how growth appears. Acceptance converts anxiety into prayerful expectancy.

Why it matters: Recognition of sovereignty prevents bitterness.

Subpoint 3.2 — Seasons of Maturation

Analysis: Growth follows seasons (seed-time, waiting, fruit). Misreading a season leads to discouragement.

Why it matters: Learning seasons reduces premature shortcuts or unfair comparisons.

Subpoint 3.3 — God's Hidden Timing Refines Character

Analysis: Delay often serves sanctification, fostering patience and dependence.

Why it matters: Waiting can transform frustration into worship.

Subpoint 3.4 — Faithful Expectancy — Active Trust

Analysis: Active expectancy includes working faithfully, praying persistently, and resting with hope.

Why it matters: Active trust channels energy into perseverance and hope.

Life Application — Whole Point:

- Journal one area of delay and three ways it might be forming you.
- Create a "timing prayer" to recenter on God's sovereignty.
- Set realistic milestones rather than expecting instant results.
- Celebrate small signs of growth; maintain a "growing signs" list.

Discussion Questions:

1. Where have you experienced God's good timing in the past?
 2. Which waits feel most difficult — what might God be teaching?
 3. How can you practice active expectancy this week?
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Overall Conclusion

We plant and water; God gives the growth. Nurturing growth requires intentional watering, patient persistence, and trust in God's timing. Faithfulness in small things, steadfast endurance, and humility prepares the soil for God's increase.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for nurturing growth in our lives. Teach us to water faithfully, persevere patiently, and trust Your timing. May our efforts be fruitful in Your kingdom, and may we glorify You in all we do. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Homework / Reflection

- Read 1 Corinthians 3:1–15 slowly three times.
- Practice watering: choose one person to encourage this week, record results.
- 30-day spiritual habit: Scripture, prayer, or gratitude journaling.
- Timing reflection: one page on struggles trusting God's timing.
- Small group accountability: midweek check-in; share encouragement and prayer requests.