

Discipline: Rooted, Not Resolved

Acts 2:42-47; Psalm 1:1-3; John 15:4-5; Colossians 2:6-7; Revelation 22:2; Philippians 1:6

Resolutions:

At the beginning of every new year, something stirs in us. We set goals. We make plans. We write resolutions with the sincere hope that this year will be different. We want healthier habits, stronger faith, better relationships, and more peace. None of those desires are wrong. In fact, many of them are good and honor God.

But if we're honest, most New Year's resolutions don't fail because we don't care—they fail because we try to push through with our own willpower and grit and determination. The Bible never presents transformation as something we force through determination alone. Instead, Scripture consistently describes change as something that grows.

The Early Church:

Read Acts 2:42-47. This is the early church. Notice that the believers did a lot of things together. If you are adding people to your church daily, then there had to have been a lot of teaching involved at different levels of understanding so that everyone could become more spiritually disciplined and grow in the way that God desired for them to grow. It took people rooted in their faith to produce fruit to allow new followers to see and desire that same level of spiritual discipline. In turn, it led that person to becoming a rooted follower of Christ.

In Psalms it describes someone who has achieved a level of disciple much like those from the early church. Read Psalm 1:1-3. Notice the image. A tree doesn't strain to produce fruit. Fruit is the result of being planted in the right place. Healthy roots lead to lasting growth in all seasons of life.

Rooted:

How do we achieve this level of discipline in our lives? Today we start a new series called Discipline (not as in punishment, but discipline as training—the slow, intentional work God does in us over time). This series will explore how God forms discipline in our minds, bodies, and souls, not through pressure, but through presence.

Today is a bit of an intro message, but I want us all to start thinking a little differently about how to get a fresh start this year. Instead of asking, "What do I need to fix about myself this year?" we're asking a better question: "What am I rooted in?"

Jesus used this same imagery when He said, "*Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine... If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*" (John 15:4-5).

Jesus doesn't say, "Try harder on your own." or "if you just push a bit harder". He says, "Remain." Our transformation comes from connection, not from phrases like, No pain no Gain!

Too often, we try to resolve our way into a new life instead of allowing God to root us into one. But Colossians 2 reminds us of the proper order. Read Colossians 2:6–7. Roots come before fruit.

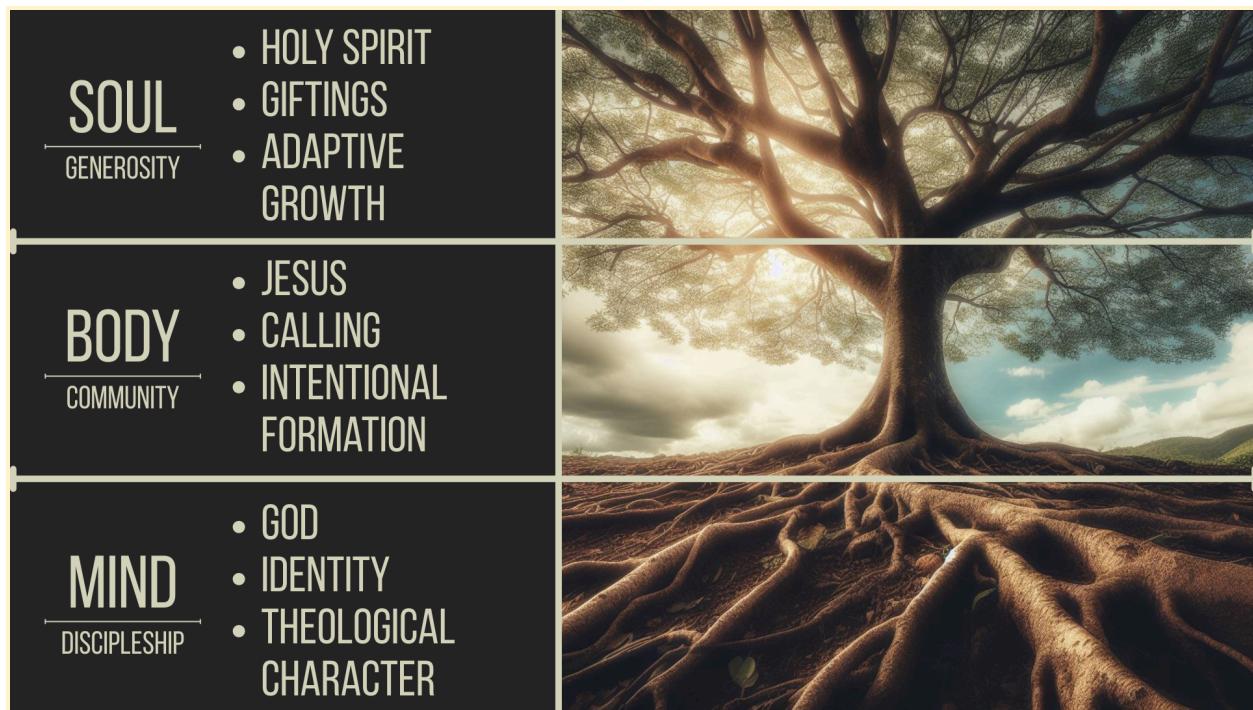
From the very beginning of Scripture, God has shown us this pattern. In Genesis, the tree of life stood in the center of the garden—a symbol of ongoing dependence on God as the source of life (Genesis 2:9). And in the final pages of Scripture, that same tree appears again.

Read Revelation 22:2. From beginning to end, life is found not in self-effort, but in abiding with God.

This year, we're not resolving to be better people—we're rooting ourselves more deeply in Christ. And as we do, God promises to do the transforming work we cannot do on our own.

Upcoming:

The next few weeks, we want to talk through how we become more disciplined in Mind, Body, and Soul. Why these three things? A while back we were doing a series and Kerry created this graphic which is a three legged stool. The stool can not stand fully if any one of these legs are missing. Just like the three legged stool, we must have discipline in all three areas in order to be rooted properly like Christ intended. The stool is all about balance - but I wanted to focus a bit more on what is needed for growth. Like the stool, this tree graphic is based on the Trinity.



Have you ever:

- had poor mental health because of poor physical health?
- had poor spiritual health because of poor mental health?

- had poor physical health because of poor mental health?
- had improved mental health because of improved physical health?
- had improved physical health because of improved mental health?
- had improved mental health because of improved spiritual health?

I think I raised my hand on every single one of those because it all works together. I don't think it's possible to improve only one area of your life without it positively affecting another area, and the same is true in reverse.

Through this series I hope to learn how to become rooted, not just in one area of my life, but in all areas of my life so that I can become more disciplined. Not through my own doing, or understanding, but through the work that God will do in my life.

Philippians 1:6

"He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Reflection Questions:

- It is not only important where/in what we grow our roots, but it is also important who we are rooted beside.
 - Have you ever been closely connected with someone who was a negative influence? How did it affect you?
 - Have you ever been closely connected with someone who was a strong and positive influence? How did it affect you?
 - How can we be sure we are positively influencing those rooted next to us?
- Take a moment to answer the question: "What am I rooted in?"
 - How does your answer affect your mental, physical, and spiritual health?
 - How does your answer affect the fruit you bear?