



# The Great Exchange

*“I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn’t produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more.”*

*Jesus Christ | John 15:1-2 (NLT)*

Have you noticed how most government-sponsored programs begin with good intentions but, over time, end up as muddled disasters—ripe for the other party’s criticism? It seems to be a characteristic of human efforts... or perhaps it’s God’s way of showing us that man’s “good path” is far from his “Great Path.”

Could God go so far as to cause—or allow—the failure of good efforts? Consider his intervention long ago in Babel:

*"Then they said, 'Come, let's build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world.'*

*But the Lord came down to look at the city and the tower the people were building. 'Look!' he said. 'The people are united, and they all speak the same language. After this, nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them! Come, let's go down and confuse the people with different languages. Then they won't be able to understand each other.' In that way, the Lord scattered them all over the world, and they stopped building the city." (Genesis 11:4-7)*

In fact, the Bible is full of examples of God disrupting good, Kingdom work:

*"A great wave of persecution began that day, sweeping over the church in Jerusalem; and all the believers except the apostles were scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria... But the believers who were scattered preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went." (Acts 8:1-4)*

Think about it: could God be satisfied with man's good path?

**Reflect: What good path of mine has God disrupted?**

What's your vision for the path of your life? Healthier, wealthier, wiser? Travel? Family? Do you want it to matter, to make an impact? Perhaps

you have ideas for ministry—ways to serve God? Who doesn't form an ideal plan and work toward its realization? I sure have, and if you're like me, you've felt, *"This is a good path!"*

*"Next Paul and Silas traveled through the area of Phrygia and Galatia, because the Holy Spirit had prevented them from preaching the word in the province of Asia at that time." (Acts 16:6)*

Paul was taking the Good News everywhere; he wanted to evangelize Asia—a good path! But the Spirit said, "No!" It wasn't God's *Great Path* for Paul.

The reality is that even man's most thoughtful, Kingdom-minded work is still only good in God's eyes—ripe for his intervention. God insists on moving everything onto his *Great Path* even if that means stripping our good path from us—ouch!

***Consider: The Great Exchange—My good path is sacrificed for deeper Intimacy.***

As the dispersal of the church in Jerusalem demonstrates, God's *Great Path* advances Jesus' Great Commission—taking the Good News to the ends of the earth. He'll never allow the church (or you) to settle for good.

*"Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new*

*disciples to obey all the commands I have given you.” Jesus Christ  
(Matthew 28:19-20)*

To advance his Mission, God offers an ever-deepening, intimate relationship with himself... he opens us to this by pruning our good path. Without deepening Intimacy, there'll be no fruit.

*“Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.” Jesus Christ (John 15:4-5)*

You may not realize you've grown comfortable in your good works—but that's not your call. If God determines it, he'll prune you—he must move you onto his *Great Path*, and he'll do it repeatedly. While stripping away your good path, he offers deeper Intimacy—this is the Great Exchange.

*Imagine: **My good path aligning more and more with God's Great Path.***

When your good path is pruned, your Intimacy with God increases, and your redirected path resembles his *Great Path* more. Pruning is always painful and often defies reason—but you'll discover that deeper Intimacy is more than worth it.

*“And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must*

*continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.” The Apostle Paul (Colossians 2:6-7)*

With each pruning cycle, the Great Exchange leads you back to the Gospel for an ever more sober look. Freshly filled with mercy and grace, you’re readied for a promotion—higher Kingdom work (learn more: [“There I Was...”](#)) Requiring greater faith and likely offering less worldly reward, a promotion positions you to serve more sacrificially—and you’ll experience the fruit of...

### **The Great Exchange!**

Go off the grid and ask these questions:

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#### **Coach’s Questions**

- **Reflect:** How fruitful is my current good path—has my testimony grown cold?
- **Pray:** *“God, allow me to experience the fruit of the Great Exchange!”*
- **Prepare:** Fix my thoughts on experiencing deeper Intimacy.
- Don’t know my Mission? [Start here!](#)

# Spirit Talk

Post this where you will see it regularly.

## The Great Exchange: Pruning >> Intimacy >> Kingdom Fruit.

*"Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better."*

*The Apostle Paul | Colossians 1:10 (NLT)*



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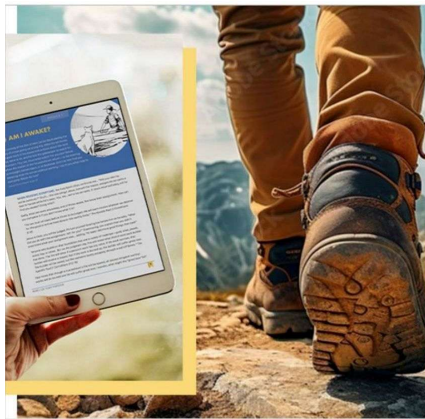
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~ DAN B.

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