

The Influence Of This Godless World On Our Spiritual Growth

Genesis 2:8-9 [NIV] *“Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground, trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”*

The original humans were given a God-made garden of fruitful trees.

Genesis 2:10, 15-17 [NIV] *“A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters.” ... “The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.’”*

All of this describes an environment that would **not** take a great deal of sweat and toil to take care of.

Genesis 3:17-19 [NIV] *“To Adam he said, ‘Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, “You must not eat of it,” Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.’”*

But because of sin human beings were forced to dwell in a field, outside this God-prepared garden, where they wrested a living with a great deal of sweat, toil and tears.

This field is only preserved in a fruitful state with endless toil, relax your efforts for a few years and the wilderness will claim the field and all your sweat and toil will come to nothing.

The jungle and the forest will swallow your labour and loving care.

Every farmer knows of this hunger of the wilderness, a law that is built into physical creation.

The bias of nature is towards the wilderness, never towards the fruitful field.

To the alert Christian, this fact will be a parable, an object lesson showing a law that affects our spiritual life.

The moral bent of this godless world is **not** towards godliness but away from it.

Each new Christian needs to learn this lesson from nature as soon as possible after their conversion.

Too often the impression given by the Christian fellowship is that repentance and conversion is a once-and-for-all victory over the influence of this society that lives in the deceptive wilderness ruled over by Satan. [**2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 5:19; Revelation 12:9**]

The truth is that **no** spiritual experience can exempt us from temptation, and what is temptation but the effort of society’s wilderness to encroach upon our newly-cleared field.

Any purified mind and life is obnoxious to Satan and all his human servants. [**2 Corinthians 11:14-15**]

1 Peter 5:8-9 [NIV] *“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.”*

Satan is looking for any means to destroy, kill our changed lifestyle; he will not rest until he and his servants have won back what they have lost.

This satanic “*jungle*” will creep in and seek to swallow up the tiny areas that have been cultivated in our lives by our contact with the Holy Spirit, “*fruits*” of Godlike character that are being cultivated in our mind and human spirit. [**Galatians 5:22-23**]

Only through watchfulness and constant “*cultivation*” of prayer and study of God’s Word, the Christian Bible, can we preserve what we have carved out of the wilderness through the operation of the Holy Spirit in our lives and God’s grace.

The neglected mind and human spirit will very soon be overrun with worldly thoughts, the neglected life will soon become a moral wilderness.

Even a Christian fellowship that is **not** jealously protected by mighty prayers of intercession for its members and sacrificial labour of leaders and members, will before long become the abode and hiding place of unsuspected corruption.

The creeping wilderness will soon take over any Christian fellowship that is **not** cultivated by Holy Spirit directed study of God’s Word, the Christian Bible, and watchful prayers, [**John 16:13**].

If a Christian fellowship does make new converts, if they are left without adequate care, it is like turning loose a flock of newborn lambs into the middle of the wilderness, or it is absurd as to clear and plant a field in the heart of woodland and leave it to the mercies of undisciplined nature.

Any spiritual maturity that is not cultivated continually will be killed or lost. Any spiritual gains, **must** be conserved by watchfulness, and nourished with study of God’s Word, the Christian Bible, on a regular basis and heartfelt prayer to our Creator God, for strength and protection.