



## SKIT

# "SHE IS LIKE A TREE PLANTED BY THE WATER"

### Production Notes

This is a four-act serial skit. Each act represents a season in our lives.

**SUMMARY:** Five saplings are moved from the greenhouse and planted by the water. There is a mature tree also growing there, who is a voice of godly wisdom for the young saplings. Each sapling has issues in her life to deal with; they will face temptations and storms, and see fruit developing in their own branches as they continue to abide.

**THEME SCRIPTURE:** Jeremiah 17:7-8 "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river and will not fear when heat comes. But its leaf will be green and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit".

### **CHARACTERS:**

Tree #1 - "Works"- Self-sufficient (*tool belt*)(*rain gauge*)(*clipboard*)

Tree #2 - "Insecure"- normal, with issues of insecurity/envious

Tree #3 - "Wounded"- normal with issues with a past/wounded/walls

Tree #4 - "Worldly" - worldly, defensive, New Yorker (*based on character in "Green Acres"*)

Tree #5 - "Mommy" - busy mommy/other priorities

Tree #6 - "Mentor" - mature tree (*laden with fruit of all kinds*)

Artificial tree (*obviously artificial, like Christmas tree, with some obviously fake fruit hanging, like a melon or pineapple*)

Beelzabug - insect pest (*dressed in black, antennae*)

### **PROPS AND COSTUMES:**

The artificial tree should be perhaps a small christmas tree or ficus tree--something that is obviously not real. The bug should be dressed in black.

The mentor tree would be best played by an older woman, decorated with all sorts of fruit. We covered a hat with artificial fruit, and in addition covered a wreath with fruit to put around her neck. We want it to be obvious to the audience that this was a fruitful tree.

Trees #1-#5 each have character qualities listed above. Suggested props are listed beside each tree. In the end, someone made scenery to represent the trees; but if you don't have someone to do that for you, keep it simple. Each tree wore a headband with leaves which was enough to give the impression that they were trees. See the illustrations below.



**TIMING:**

Act I - Approximately 25 minutes

Act II - Approximately 10-15 minutes

Act II - 15-20 minutes

Act IV - 2 minutes

**STAGING:** Because trees are stationary, the only character which moves in this skit is the bug. The mentor tree (#6) should be on one side of the stage, while the artificial tree is on the opposite side. Trees #1-#5 are lined up between them. Beelzebug is sitting on the floor by the artificial tree.

**CHALLENGES:** One challenge we faced with this skit was making sure that all characters were heard. It depends on the size of your audience, of course, but it is probably that you will need microphones. We used two mikes. The mentor tree had her own microphone, while the saplings and bug passed around a microphone.

# "SHE IS LIKE A TREE PLANTED BY THE WATER"

(Script)

## ACT 1 - "FALL" (Contentment and Foundations)

**Narrator:** I have some seedlings here, seedlings that I planted and cultivated and nurtured in my greenhouse. The time finally arrived that I was able to transplant them outdoors, in a place I've carefully chosen for each one. The place is one where each of them will have the maximum opportunity for growth and fruitfulness. I have planted each one in close proximity to the source of her nourishment, the river of Living Water. I have a unique and special purpose for each of these trees, and even now I can see them as the mature trees that they will be, established with deep roots, strong and green, fruitful and useful. They are the planting of the Lord, that they may one day be called trees of righteousness. The Lord will be glorified in and through them.

*(five saplings are all shivering)*

**Insecure:** Brrr... I'm freezing. Why did He have to move us out here and transplant us? I loved the greenhouse. It was so warm and cozy in there! Everything was controlled to suit me—the watering, the humidity, the temperature, and the feeding. I was in the midst of a growth spurt, and now, so abruptly thrust out here, exposed to the elements. I just don't know if I can do it? Am I going to be able to make it out here? What's going to happen to me now?

**Wounded:** In my past, my root system was wounded and abused. That's why I loved the greenhouse and that potting soil mixture I was in—my roots were surrounded by nutrients. It was like a healing balm to my tender roots. Now I feel like I have been left abandoned again! I feel very exposed and vulnerable out here. How will I ever heal in this harsh, cold environment?

**Worldly:** You callin' this cold? You must be from the south. This is just sweater weather for me. But this wind! I don't know if my back is strong enough to stand up to this wind—where are we, in Chicago? Do I look like a White Sox fan to you? And what if there is a storm? There's no protection from the severe weather out here. I miss the big city—it's amazing how a few skyscrapers can provide shelter from the worst of the wind. I just adore a penthouse view!

**Works:** And the mist from that river...I'm going to catch a cold. Wind-chill down here by the river must be 40 degrees. There must be something I can do to make this more bearable for me. Where is that Gardener, anyway? Guess He expects us to fend for ourselves out here. All right—no problem—I'll just start drawing up some plans. Luckily, I have my clipboard with me!

**Mommy:** Why would He uproot my whole family and move us to such an uncomfortable spot? I thought He loved us. I have these little saplings growing at my base. I was already overwhelmed in the greenhouse. You have no idea what my day is like. I have no time to myself, and so many worries and cares. No wonder I feel drained all the time—they are sucking the sap out of me. And these conditions only make my job harder. I'm just confused. It doesn't make sense.

**Wounded:** I feel so weak and helpless out here...

**Insecure:** I know. It's not like we've got a strong trunk and branches and lots of leaves and fruit like HER (*pointing to Mentor*). It looks like she could probably handle anything.

*(all of the trees turn and look at the same time)*

**Mentor:** (*laughing gently*) Good morning, young trees. I want to welcome you to the neighborhood. I couldn't help but overhear your discussion, and I understand your concerns. I may seem strong and established, but it wasn't that long ago that I was just where you are now—immature and newly planted by the water.

**Worldly:** (*to other trees*) Oh my! Is that what lies in our future? (*to Mentor*) No offense, but do you realize that you have a fruit salad growing out of your head? The produce up-do is so 1980.

**Insecure:** (*disbelief*) (*to Wounded*) Yeah, right. No way! There's no way I can see her ever being like me...or me ever becoming like her!

**Mentor:** Now, young trees, be honest. Weren't your roots starting to be cramped in that greenhouse pot you were in? Your growing would have been stunted had you been left there. Here in the great outdoors, you have room to grow and spread your roots. Here, you have no limitations!

**Worldly:** The great outdoors? Growing and spreading? Is that what you call that look? I may petition to get back into the greenhouse... I get allergic smelling hay! (*sneeze*)

**Wounded:** No limitations? She thinks we all had an equal start in life. I was abused and abandoned before I got to the greenhouse. She has no idea what side of the soil I was dug up from. If she only knew where my tender roots have been and what they have been exposed to... I still have open wounds and scars that never seem to completely heal. I don't know if you've noticed the scar on this branch (*indicates large scar on branch*).

**Worldly:** Yeah! We've noticed!

**Mommy:** There is no hope of me growing as strong and firm as her when these little ones are so demanding. I'll be good just to maintain and avoid root rot.

**Worldly:** Sure, you've probably been out here a hundred years! *(to Mentor)* The world has so much more to offer...so many more beautiful and sophisticated locales. Have I mentioned how much I adore a penthouse view! I don't know how I'll make here—"land spreading out so far and wide".

**Works:** *(furiously scribbling on clipboard)* How did she survive out here for this long? I need to design a plan so that all my needs will be met. If I just can come up with the perfect system and structure, I'll adjust the variables while keeping the controls accurate. If I factor in the greenhouse effect and keep the growth formula constant.... I know I can do it.... Once I figure it all out, maybe I can market it!

**Insecure:** *(to Mentor)* I think you're just being modest—trying to make us feel good. You never looked like we look—spindly trunk, this sorry excuse for foliage. We look pathetic out here.

**Mentor:** No, it's true. I was young, and weak and fearful and unsure when I was first planted here...maybe not quite as rude as some of you *(to Worldly)*. But now I realize that this was the best place for me to grow tall and strong.

**Worldly:** And wrinkled...don't forget wrinkled. And aside from the wrinkles, I still can't imagine getting as big and strong as you...out here in all this obnoxious wind! Dahling, I love you—but give me Park Avenue!

**Mentor:** Young ones, it is not my thick trunk and branches that make me strong. It is not what you see, but what you don't see. My roots have grown deep and established me. I've drunk deeply from this river of Living Water, and basked in the light of His love and grace. I've had years to grow in the knowledge of Him and His ways...

**Worldly:** *(interrupts)* Years and years and years...

**Mentor:** *(clears throat)* as I was saying, I still have my struggles. It is time for you to put down your roots and become established here.

**Worldly:** *(very dramatic)* Goodbye City Life!

**Wounded:** Easy for you to say! I have a feeling you've led a pretty charmed life—without all the obstacles I've had to overcome.

**Mommy:** Time? What's that? I don't have time to make my roots grow deep. I have to make sure these little one get their water first; I'll be lucky if I just get their leftovers. If I just get enough to quench my thirst, I'll be good to go...and when I say go, I mean go. Speaking of which, we have piano lessons and soccer practice *(pause--sigh)*...Is that the dryer buzzer I heard?

**Works:** There is a lot we don't know here. Do you think we're going to get this water for free? Who's to say that the river won't dry up or change course or something?

**Insecure:** What? Is anyone else concerned about the water? Could the water be contaminated?

**Works:** That's exactly my point—we don't know. I have to look out for #1 or I'm not going to make it. Don't get me wrong—I'm thankful to be out here, but doesn't she make this sound too easy to be true? I need more assurances than that. I need to perfect my plan (*waves clipboard*) and rely on myself to get it done. I'm glad I have my trusty tool belt—I can build what I need. Maybe I could build a dam, or recycle the rainwater, or maybe even build a terrarium around me. I don't feel comfortable just trusting, and I do not want to get as wrinkled and weather-beaten as her! I've got my baby-smooth bark to protect. Where's my Murphy's Oil?

**Worldly:** Murphy's Oil? Good luck with that. Where do you get that—Home Depot? What you need is the good stuff. What you need is a whole bark care system, starting with the cleanser and astringent. Moisturizer is of utmost importance when you're in the sun all day—and don't forget, we need spf 500 minimum if the Gardener is leaving us out here. Where is my Oil of Olay Wrinkle Cream? (*dabs it on*)

**Works:** Is that your plan? That's not a plan—that's a spa treatment!

**Worldly:** Don't knock the spa if you haven't tried it...and obviously, you haven't! Would it kill you to pluck a bit here and there?

**Mentor:** (*to Worldly*) Young trees, this bickering will get you nowhere. You're looking at the twig in her eye, when you have a plank in your own. Listen to yourselves... complaining, arguing with one another. You all are letting weeds of discontent grow around you. If you don't deal with them, those weeds are going to take all the moisture and nutrients from the soil and leave you nothing.

**World:** These weeds? You're talking about these weeds? I don't call these weeds. Where I come from, we call this "Bling". (*pause*) I don't want to look like all you other trees out here. Obviously, you haven't seen what all the trees in New York and Paris are sporting this year. Accessorizing is the name of the game. And did you see this? This is a flower. These are the latest thing. These "weeds" as you call them aren't hurting me or anyone else—they are accentuating the full-figuredness of my trunk!

**Wounded:** These weeds? These are comforting and familiar.

**Insecure:** These weeds? They camouflage my spindly trunk. I'm very self-conscious about my trunk.



**Mommy:** These weeds? The kids love to play in those weeds! Hide and seek keeps them occupied for hours.

**Mentor:** All weeds are bad, young trees. When you allow weeds to grow among your roots, they fight you for the nutrients and the moisture in the soil. While they may be familiar, they are not something that you can hide behind. They hinder your growth and deceive you.

**World:** Oh yeah? In the city, I can easily hire someone to take care of that kind of pesky weed problem. Don't you have a spa where I could have a weed-waxing every few weeks?

**Works:** A weed-whacker! That's what I need! I could take care of your weeds in a few minutes.

**World:** Oh, you people are killing me. If I could only move I'd whack you myself.

**Works:** What did I say?

**Insecure:** *(to Mentor)* I really admire that fruit you have decorating your branches. Did you find those at the farmer's market?

**Mommy:** Is someone heading to the market? I need diapers, and wipes and juice boxes and I think it's my week for snacks after soccer practice...

**Insecure:** We're not going to the market...we're talking about that fruit on her branches. I was asking where it came from.

**Mommy:** Ohhh...never mind then. I don't have time to worry about such things—I'm lucky if I get to mist my leaves and brush my bark by dinner time. I don't have the luxury of worrying about my appearance...but I sure could use some help with the marketing.

**Wounded:** *(to Insecure)* Is there a fruit stand nearby? I've always admired pineapples...do you think I could find pineapples for my branches? I know I can't produce them myself.

**Mentor:** No, no, young trees. Our fruit doesn't come from a farmer's market. Fruit doesn't hang on your branches—it grows as a result of abiding. You will all one day have fruit also—IF you choose to abide. His plan is for you to have an abundance of fruit. Fruit growing needs lots of water—so that's why He planted you by the flowing River of Living Water. Have patience. You're just getting established. This is just the beginning.

**Insecure:** *(pointing at artificial tree)* Just look at her fruit—and her leaves—*(whispering)* Look at those HUGE melons—they look so round and ripe and perfect; SURELY they aren't real.

**Artificial:** They might be...and don't call me Shirley!

**All Trees:** *(everyone looks puzzled—where did that voice come from)*

**Wounded:** Well, if you only knew my past, I know I could never produce fruit like that or like that *(gestures toward artificial and Mentor)* I could never have as perfect fruit as that—or as much fruit as that. There's no hope for me!

**Works:** Well, I'm not worried. I may not be in a greenhouse anymore, but I think I have figured out how to create my own greenhouse effect. Look *(shows clipboard)* I'm well on my way to developing the exact formula that I'm going to need. I'm going to use this formula, and I'm going to build a makeshift terrarium to resemble the greenhouse, and you guys just watch my fruit grow. It'll be just as perfect as hers, and as plentiful as hers.

**Bug:** *(rubbing "hands together in anticipation):* Fresh bark, immature root systems...and tender leaves. Mmmm....mmmm good. A smorgasbord awaits me.



## **Act 2 - "WINTER" (Trials and Tribulations)**

**Narrator:** My seedlings have had some time now to get acclimated to their new location. Even though they don't always see me, they have never been alone. I have been walking in the midst of them every day, making sure that they are provided for and have all that they need to grow strong. They have water, they have sun, they have fertile ground, and they have each other. But they also have choices to make... Sin and temptations are all around, and those weeds will seek to steal their nutrients. There is an enemy who seeks find weaknesses where he can attack, and his purpose is to kill and destroy. My little trees can choose to put their roots down and drink deeply of the Living Water and truly abide in that which makes them strong and healthy, or they can choose to drink only when they are watered on Sunday. I will need to add some trials and tribulations --some wind and storms, some heat and drought--to force them to recognize their need to trust me and put down deep roots. This is part of my perfect plan of growth. Without being tested, they will be lazy and weak.

**Bug:** Hey, everyone. Looks like you all are getting good sun and water out here. How are you doing?? *(to Works)* Oh, I love this terrarium, you take really good care of yourself.

**Bug:** *(to Worldly)* I love the bling—it really works for you. Love the bark, the leaves, branches... You are stylin' You need to get back to the big city. What is an uptown girl like you doing in Hicksville anyway? You need to get away from this place, it's holding you back. You seem to be the only one who really knows what matters around here.

**Bug:** *(passes by Mommy...)* Hello, there, how's it going? *(Mommy makes no sign of hearing)* Hmmmm...

**Bug:** Bzzzzzzzz.... *(bothering saplings)*

**Mommy:** Stop it! I don't care if he touched you. This arguing is driving me up a wall. I can't take this anymore. I need a day off. Ortho Weed and Feed, take me away! What is the problem? Oh, who are you?

**Bug:** Oh, wow, you sure have your branches full. You must be exhausted—how do you do it? And it doesn't look like you get a lot of help around here. Giving up your own happiness for these saplings. If your gardener really cared, why would he have uprooted you and your family? Doesn't he understand the challenges you face?

**Mommy:** You're so right. Finally, someone who understands my life. *(self-pitying)*

**Bug:** *(to Insecure)* Hi there, You feeling ok? Does your bark always look like that?

**Insecure:** *(gasp)* My bark does seem to be drying out in this sun. Do you think my leaves are withering?

**Bug:** It looks ok to me. Maybe not quite as good as everyone else's. But I'm sure you're fine, just fine.

**Wounded:** If you think her bark looks bad, I can't imagine what you would say about mine. I've already come to terms with the fact that my roots and bark and leaves will never be perfect. My past took its toll, and I can't change that.

**Bug:** Well, if your Gardener really cared for you... He's probably busy with other more important trees. Does He really love you? How could He? Don't worry, He'll probably get to you eventually....

**Bug:** *(to Artificial)* Don't tell the other trees, but you're my favorite.

**Mentor:** Hey! Get out of here. We don't need your input. We don't need to be listening to the likes of you. You don't care about us.

**Bug:** *(Gasps!)* That's not true.

**Mentor:** Yes it is, and these trees don't need your lies and distractions, especially right now. There is a storm brewing. You just come to kill and destroy trees, anyway. You're our enemy!

**Bug:** Are you judging me? I'm just calling it as I see it. Who are you to say that I don't care about the welfare of these new trees? Of course I care about them. One of these lucky trees may one day provide me and my friends a comfy, cozy home and a place to establish my colony. You say destroy, I say renovate. I'll be back!

*(Bug slinks off)*

**Insecure:** Ohhhh...D-D-Did she say a storm? I thought I felt a change in the wind. I don't think my roots can stand this!

**Wounded :** Oh...no, no! I don't think I can take another storm. I thought that being transplanted by the River of Living Water meant no more storms. I still have scars from the storms in my past.

**Works:** I'm not worried about the wind-- I can deal with the wind by putting down some stakes and tying myself down. Bring it on!

**Worldly:** A storm? That means more wind, doesn't it? I just got my foliage washed and set. I am so not interested in a storm right now. This is terrible timing. I have a big event coming up!

**Mommy:** The kids will have to stay in all day if a storm comes. What will I do with them? And my TV's on the blink! I hope I don't have to drag out the play-dough!

**Mentor:** Calm down, young trees. We all have choices to make when storms approach. But if you tie your branches down, hide inside and try to avoid it, your trunks won't have the opportunity grow stronger through the storm. There is a purpose to storms, you know.

**World:** What possible good purpose could there be to storms and wind? Did I mention that I hate wind?

**Mentor:** I remember the "Big wind of '92"... I was just a newly planted sap like yourselves. My nickname back then was "Twiggy". Oh, but it was a rough wind, and I was so afraid, but the Gardener, who began a good work in me, was faithful, and came along side me and was with me until it was over. Through His encouragement, my roots went deeper, my trunk grew stronger, and I wasn't afraid. I have a few scars, but I like to think of them as souvenirs. The Gardener is aware of the storm approaching. SURELY we'll get through this together with His help.

**Artificial:** I don't know what you guys are so worried about...and don't call me Shirley!

**Everybody:** Who said that?

**Insecure:** I want to believe you. But that cloud is so big and black. I've never seen anything like it. It scares me...

**Mommy:** It does look bad. I need to protect my little ones.

**Wounded:** I've seen storms in my day. Maybe it will be different this time, now that I belong to the Gardener. He's the first one to care how or where I grow.

**Insecure:** That's true. I'm going to try to be brave too.

**Works:** You go ahead and be brave, and I'll stake myself down. Can someone hand me some rope?

**Worldly:** It's coming! Talking time is over! Take cover! We need a storm shelter for protection—or at the very least, a Saks Fifth Avenue to duck into.\_

### **Act 3 - "SPRING" (Pruning)**

*Artificial tree is laying on the ground*

**Narrator:** My trees have been through some storms and difficult times now. Some put out roots immediately, seeking the water and nutrients they needed. Others took a little while longer to realize that their only means of survival was to trust Me and obey. The trials are making them strong. The next storm that comes by will find them a bit stronger, a bit more prepared. But they have far to go.

**Insecure:** *(looking around)* I can't believe we all made it through. We're all still standing...right?

**Wounded:** Not all of us *(pointing to the downed artificial tree)*! And she is SURELY down for the count.

**Artificial:** Help! I've fallen and I can't get up! And don't call me Shirley!

**All trees:** Who said that? Could she have said that? Is she talking?

**Worldly:** Well, no wonder she's down. Look—she had no roots at all. She looked like all of us, but she was just an imitation, I guess. Now I'm beginning to understand some of those trees I admired so much in the city—I have a feeling that a storm would topple them, too.

**Works:** Well, I'm a little disappointed. My best laid plan didn't hold up. All that work...

**Mentor:** Young trees, I'm so proud of you. You all persevered through the storm, and made it through. Storms test and prove us. When we rely on the unreliable, storms will often expose it. But also don't forget, the storms will also clear out the old and make room for new growth.

**Wounded:** Yeah! I can see that! Look, I lost a branch, but it was my scarred branch that was causing me so much trouble.

**Worldly:** I have to say that the storm made me realize what was really important. Those accessories were weighing me down and I didn't realize it. I know I looked good, but it wasn't necessarily good for me. I feel a freedom that I didn't realize was possible. Maybe that wind did me a favor - How's my foliage look?

**Mentor:** Young trees, storms can us by eliminating those things in our lives—even good things—that will hold us back from pursuing the best that the Gardener has for us.

**Worldly:** Who knew that I wouldn't mind being plain, boring, unattractive, homely—you know, like you guys.

**Mommy:** I was so worried about my family...I thought they would really be in trouble if the storm got bad. Not to mention I got no sleep all night! You try sleeping with seven wild saplings! They were scared to death, but it was comforting to know that I wasn't alone. Knowing that you were all nearby was a comfort, but I think, even more than that, your branches around us literally provided a shelter for myself and my babies. In fact, I seem to be the only one of all of us that didn't suffer branch loss. Thank you—all of you.

**Mentor:** I see you have discovered a truth about being planted close to one another. Fellowship can give us strength and protection when we go through hard times. And when one is weak another can lift him up. Look at how your new growth was protected during the storm—another proof of the Gardener's perfect plan in relocating you.

**Narrator:** For optimum fruitfulness, my trees will require pruning, so that their branches don't become spindly and unfruitful. Pruning will help them to maintain the right balance between growth and fruitfulness. Pruning and the discipline of training are not pleasant at the time, but they yield great benefit in the long run.

**Wounded:** Ow! What's going on? I lost my scarred branch in the storm, but the gardener just lopped off another perfectly healthy branch. Maybe I'm still paying the price for my past indiscretions. I remember Arbor Day. I thought the whole point was that the Gardener would heal me—not cause more pain!

**Mentor:** Don't worry, girls. He knows what He's doing. It looks bad now, and maybe it even is painful, but He has a plan with a future and a hope. He is not punishing you...He's doing what needs to be done for healthy growth.

**Mommy:** Ow! I felt something too! What is He doing? (*gasp!*) He's cutting back on my activities. How can that be healthy for me? Oh, maybe it means He's planning some relief from this 24-7 never-ending caring for saplings. This could be a good thing. What? No more bunko for me? That was my time—time for me—that was what got me through the week! Why would He prune that from my life?

**Mentor:** I know it doesn't always make sense, but sometimes the Gardener has to take things away from us so that we can focus our time properly.

**Insecure:** Ow! Oh my! Does anyone else feel a draft? I feel so naked and exposed.

(*everyone turns to look*)

**Insecure:** Don't look at me...I don't want you see me like this. He cut the one branch I was really proud of. (*trying to cover self*)

**Mentor:** You know what? That one branch that you were so proud of was actually a sucker shoot.

**Insecure:** A WHAT?

**Mentor:** That one branch was keeping healthy nutrients from nourishing you completely. In the end, a sucker shoot will keep fruit from forming and maturing. That's not what you want, is it?

**Insecure:** Oh, I guess not. Could I borrow some fig leaves...just until I feel better about myself?

**Works:** OW! Hey! He got some of my branches—and that would have been perfectly good wood for some projects I have planned. But the worst thing is, He snatched my clipboard!

**Mentor:** I know it's hard, but look, you're still standing. That's what's important! You didn't need all that self-made structure to support and protect you. You were wasting time doing your own thing when His plans were the best plans.

**Worldly:** OW! Okay, enough's enough! The de-blingification was one thing. But now you are removing parts of my anatomy that I happen to be fond of. In fact, that particular branch made me look just like Miley Cypress! Or should I say, Hannah Lantana? And now, it's all gone! *(sigh loudly!)*

**Mentor:** We're all unique in our own way. If we want to look like someone, we should strive to be what the Gardener wants us to be.

**Worldly:** If that means plain and maimed and mangled...it's working! But....I can see the good that's come out of my experience here so far. It's a good feeling to be free of some of those worldly trappings... It sure doesn't take much time to get ready these days!

**Mentor:** This pruning hurts for the moment, and it is not about how you look. He doesn't want us to imitate the ungodly trees that live in the orchards around us. He wants you to produce fruit in abundance, which will beautify you. Pruning is basically all about fruitfulness.

**Worldly** *(to Insecure)*: Speaking of fruit, what is that on your left limb?

**Insecure:** What? Where? *(gasp)* That looks like...could it be...a very tiny FRUIT! Hey everyone. I have a very tiny FRUIT

**Works:** Where? I don't see anything.

**Insecure:** Here...right here. I think it might be a fig of "faithfulness"

**Works:** *(takes out magnifying glass)* Ohhh....I think you're right. That is a growth.



**Insecure:** Not a growth...it is FRUIT.

**Worldly:** How could you have one before me? *(looks all over herself)* Wait.. could it be? I have one too. Look—it's golden! It's natural bling! Hmmm—that might be kumquat of "gentleness"?

**Works:** Hmmm... That is going to be hard to duplicate—especially without my clipboard. It looks so real.

**Worldly:** It is real, you pile of firewood! Oops! *(catches herself)* Umm, Umm...What I meant to say is...I'm sure a nice little fruit will show up on you any day now!

**Insecure:** Look at her! *(points to Wounded)*

**Wounded:** What? Am I bleeding? Where?

**Insecure:** No, no! Look right there. You have got a bunch of fruit growing, and it's beautiful.

**Wounded:** Me? Where? Ohhhh. You're right. I didn't think I would ever be worthy of fruit in bunches... I was hoping just to squeeze out a measley grape or two! And here I got a whole bunch of "longsuffering" loganberries!

**Mommy:** I've been listening to you gals—yes, I had a precious few quiet moments to listen while my saplings napped. I can't believe it, but I see a fruit blossom or two myself. Amazing. The relocation, the storm, the pruning -they have all worked together to help me see the forest in the midst of all the trees. It wasn't that my family kept me from growing—I think my family gave me the opportunity to develop this fruit. Is this a pomegranate (pineapple) of "peace"? And is this a lemon of "love"? *(pointing to Works)* Look at that branch where your clipboard was—what are those?

**Works:** Ohhhh. I think those are some calluses caused by my clipboard. *(looks closer)* Wait! I think you're right. I believe those may be some FRUITS. *(magnifying glass out again)* Yes, in fact it looks like it could be a guava of "grace" and the jujube of "joy". Hey, everyone! I have two! Hmmm...who knew?

**Mentor:** The Gardener knew...He knew from before you were even planted here. He knew you and loved you, and wanted to transform you according to His will. You will blossom and grow more and more as you continue to drink from the River of Living Water that He has provided. This is nothing compared to harvest of fruit He longs for in your lives.

**Insecure:** But what about her? What will happen to her? SURELY we can't just leave her like that.

**Artificial:** *(long wail)* Stop calling me Shirley! My name is LAVERNE.

**Mentor:** Young trees, that is what you call an artificial tree. She has no life in her branches, no living leaves, no root system, and certainly she will never produce real fruit. The Gardener did not plant her. While she resembled a tree, the best she could do was try to keep up appearances. But when the rains and wind came, she fell flat.

**All trees:** I'm glad we have roots!

### **Act IV - "SUMMER" (Conclusion)**

**Narrator:** My young trees are maturing, in spite of their struggles. Each of them has produced fruit in their season, and I am always pleased to see fruit. While they are happy to see fruit appearing in their branches, they do not realize their great potential for fruit producing. My desire is to see them produce a hundred-fold. I never want them to be content at the level they are at, because I have amazing plans for their fruitfulness. And the fruitfulness is not something they control—it is the result of them continuing to abide by the River of Living Water, trusting in the Lord to work in them His will and His good pleasure. The fruit they produce will bless the multitudes, and the seeds of that fruit will multiply for generations to come. In this, the Lord will be glorified! Amen.