



DEEP  
*Roots*

W e e k # 1 :  
*the word of God*

The Roots by the River  
By Noreen Sevret

When the rain comes, the river rises. Having lived by the river for the past 27 years, I have seen many seasons come and go as the birds build their nests here every spring and the geese congregate here before flying south for the winter months. There are many lessons God has taught me at the water's edge – ones I can apply to my life as I walk here, live here, watch the changing seasons here, and read the verses written in Psalm 1.

After a couple days of heavy rain, I begin to see the water rise at the edge of my backyard. Once I can see the water from my kitchen window, I know the water has risen high enough to go over the bank on the opposite side. If I take a walk back to the river and stand still, I see that based on the way the land lays here, when the water gets high it goes over the edges of the banks on the opposite side of the river first, as the bank on our side of the river is much higher ground.

Only one time in 27 years have I seen the water come over the bank on our side of the river. That year it was because of an ice storm in January. We ended up with 5 feet of water on our side over the riverbank. Thankfully, our house sits up higher and was not in harm's way.

What I observe happening when the river rises is that any tree next to the edge of the riverbank is in a precarious position as the dirt on the bank is gouged out by the strong force of the water going downstream, especially in a stormy time. The edge of the bank gets gouged away during storms, and after years of this, the edge of the bank grows closer to the root of the trees nearby. If the roots get exposed, the tree can actually get swept away by the force of stormy waters as well as by what may be carried downstream during a storm, i.e. other trees that have fallen, ice chunks, or garbage that someone has thrown away or left on the river's edge somewhere after fishing, etc.... They hit the edge of the bank and further destroy the roots of the tree exposed on the edge. We have lost many trees this way over the years as they toppled down in the middle of storms when the river rose high. We have probably lost nearly 20 feet of our land to the river in this fashion. We also have many trees out by the river that continue to thrive as the river flows just beyond where it is planted.

There are times when we need the river to rise in our heart (a move of God) so that a cleansing happens and all the "junk" that has died at the edge of the riverbank and collected there over time can be washed out of our life and heart. It may involve uprooting things in our life that we may be attached to that need to go, just like how the roots can be exposed by the trees by the riverbank.

I find this analogy fitting to Psalm 1 as King David writes about how we are like trees planted along a riverbank. A healthy tree needs to have healthy roots to bear fruit. A healthy life needs healthy roots to bear fruit as well.

As your family gathers together, or as you spend time yourself this week thinking about healthy roots, I have a few ideas for you to do and/or think about during this week. You can pick as many as you would like to:

1. Take a walk by a river near you. Look at what is collected at the edges. Look at the trees there and how they thrive, grow, bend, and fall. Sit by the river and read Psalm 1. Pray about what it means for

you and your family. If you have children with you, ask them what they notice here. What do you notice? Write about your experience here at the river.

2. Do a word study of Psalm 1:3-4. Compare these verses in different versions of the Bible. A Commentary is available on many Bible apps on cell phones or on their website. It will allow you to compare different versions and learn about what it may mean in Hebrew or Greek. What do you find that you can apply to your own life?

3. What does “Rooting” look like for your life – for a healthy mom, dad, child, grandparent, or friend.

4. Going deeper: Read Psalm 119. Identify who wrote this Psalm. Look at the following verses in Psalm 119 – vs. 25, 28, 37, 50, 92, 93, 107, 148, 149, 153, 154, 156, 159, 169, 170, and 176. There is a common thread to these, and maybe more. In studying these verses, there is a deeper rooting that will happen in you. For example, David refers in verse 25 how he was “completely discouraged”, yet he writes, “revive me by your word”. It is the Word of God that revives us, takes us deeper, and leads us to a place where our roots are deep. I realized that these verses are just like the roots of a tree in my life. When I memorize them (or others), they stay rooted in my heart.

a. Write down the examples from each of these verses. They all point to God’s word. They all point to the roots we need in our life to give us strength in the storms.

b. How are these verses real for you?

5. Tell a story to your family or someone you know about how you spiritually put roots down and/or a time when your life may have been uprooted in some way and how God met you in that uprooting and/or storm. They may need the encouragement you give at this time in your life.



WEEK 1  
DEEP  
roots

Satan Tells Lies but God's Word Tells Us the Truth

By Joe Pangia

Depression is something that more and more people are struggling with in our society today. So many people are filled with self-doubt, wondering if they have a purpose in life. Many feel alone, isolated from others, convinced that no one really cares about them. They reach out for help, but often they are searching for that help in the wrong place.

In the midst of our daily struggles and stresses, it is easy to overlook spending time in God's Word. The solution to those feelings of isolation, inadequacy and self-doubt are contained within Scripture. All too often we hesitate to turn to God for the reassurance we need because we've made ourselves vulnerable to the lies of Satan. "You're not good enough", "God won't forgive that sin", "Everyone's against you", "Nobody really loves you", these are all lies that Satan whispers in our ear. Lies designed to keep us separated from God.

God's Word tells a different story however. Throughout scripture, God tells us not only who we are, but how much we mean to Him. When Satan tells us lies that we are unloved, God tells us the truth, we are his children (John 1:12 and Romans 8:17). When Satan says we are all alone, God tells us the truth, that the Holy Spirit lives within us and that we are joined with the Lord, one spirit with him (1 Corinthians 6:19 and 1 Corinthians 6:17). When Satan whispers that God won't forgive "that" sin, God tells us the truth, if we confess our sins, he forgives us and cleanses us from all unrighteousness and remembers the sin no more (John 1:9 and Hebrews 8:12).

Satan and his helpers are bombarding us every day, telling us lies to try to keep us away from God. That's why it is vitally important to spend time reading God's Word every day. Being deeply rooted in His Word will ingrain in us the truth to counter every one of Satan's lies. Spending time in Scripture will also reinforce who God says we are to him, and how very much he loves us.

Let us strive to spend some time every day, even if only a few minutes, reading the Word of God. Keeping ourselves rooted in his Word is the only way to know the truth and defeat the lies of the evil one.

Challenge:

One of the lies Satan tells us is, the more "stuff" we have, the happier we will be. What is the truth that God tells us in 1 Timothy 6:6-10?

Prayer:

Father, thank you for giving us your Word. I pray your Word will take root inside me as I spend time reading it and learning it, and I pray for the wisdom to apply the truths in your Word as I live my daily life. Amen

They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit.

Jeremiah 17:8 NLT

