

### Getting Started

Do you have any experience with pruning plants—whether it’s deadheading flowers, shaping shrubs, or nurturing fruits and vegetables? Briefly share your experience?

What’s the necessity of that kind of pruning?

### Into the Bible

The Bible uses a number of images for our purification. What’s the image in these verses?

1 Peter 3:21—

Romans 6:3-5—

How does the image of water change between these two descriptions of Baptism”

Luke 22:31—

Ezekiel 22:17-22 and Malachi 3:2-3—

John 15:1-2—

Why do you suppose so many of those images sound, well, painful?

Read Hebrews 12:4-13. How is discipline a sign of parental love?

What does the author have to say about the purpose of such hardship/discipline?

Finally, John 15:5. How does pruning make you even more dependent on Christ the vine?

### Digging Deeper

Talk about the hymn verse, “When ev’ry earthly prop gives way / He then is all my hope and stay.” What happens when you lose something that has been helping you keep your physical balance?

What are some spiritual props that we depend on? How do the hardships of life knock those props away? Who can you depend on when you can’t depend on anything else?