

IN THE  
GARDEN

# TEND THE GARDEN OF YOUR HEART

IT WAS A WARM, SUNNY MORNING WHEN FRED GARDENER STROLLED TO HIS PLOT OF LAND. NEAT ROWS OF CARROTS, TWINING TOMATO VINES, FRUIT TREES, AND COLORFUL FLOWERS FILLED HIS GARDEN.

"I HAVE A LOT OF WORK TO DO TODAY TO KEEP MY GARDEN LOOKING NICE AND THE PLANTS HEALTHY," HE SAID. "I WONDER WHERE I SHOULD START."

"I LIKE TO HELP MR. GARDENER IN THE GARDEN," WORMY SAID. "IT'S MY JOB TO KEEP THE SOIL HEALTHY."



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FRED GARDENER IS GOOD AT HIS JOB, EVEN THOUGH TENDING A GARDEN TAKES A LOT OF WORK. ONCE THE SEEDS ARE PLANTED, THERE IS PLENTY TO DO. SEEDS NEED THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF SUNSHINE AND WATER TO GROW. THE PLANTS NEED TO BE FERTILIZED, AND THEY MUST BE PROTECTED FROM WEEDS THAT MIGHT STEAL NOURISHMENT FROM THEM. EVERY DAY THAT FRED WORKS IN HIS GARDEN, HE CHECKS TO MAKE SURE THE BIRDS, BUGS, AND SNAILS HAVE NOT BEEN EATING OR HURTING HIS PLANTS. MR. GARDENER TAKES GOOD CARE OF HIS PLANTS, AND LOVES TO SEE THEM GROW.

“WORMY, DID YOU KNOW THAT OUR HEARTS ARE LIKE GARDENS?” MR. GARDENER ASKED. “THE THINGS WE READ, SEE, AND DO ARE LIKE SEEDS. WE WANT TO PLANT GOOD SEEDS IN OUR HEARTS, SO THAT OUR ACTIONS AND WORDS ARE KIND AND FILLED WITH LOVE.”

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"OH NO!" CRIED FRED. "CROWS! I'D BETTER MAKE SURE THEY DON'T EAT THE TURNIPS I JUST PLANTED. SHOO! SHOO!"

"MAYBE WE SHOULD MAKE A SCARECROW," WORMY SAID. "THIS PLAN WILL MAKE THE BEST SCARECROW!"

"THAT'S A GOOD IDEA," FRED GARDENER SAID. "MY LAST SCARECROW IS OLD AND WORN OUT. I COULD USE A NEW ONE. BUT FIRST I NEED TO WATER ALL MY PRETTY FLOWERS. THEY MUST BE THIRSTY."

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"PLANTS NEED WATER TO GROW," FRED EXPLAINED.  
"JUST LIKE GOD'S CHILDREN NEED THE WATER OF  
HIS WORD TO HELP THEM GROW STRONG IN FAITH.  
WITHOUT GOD'S WORD, OUR HEARTS GET THIRSTY."

WORMY WAS ENJOYING A REFRESHING SHOWER  
HIMSELF WHEN HE NOTICED SOMETHING IN THE  
FLOWERBED.

"OH NO, MR. GARDENER!" HE CRIED. "WEEDS! BIG,  
BAD WEEDS! WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?"

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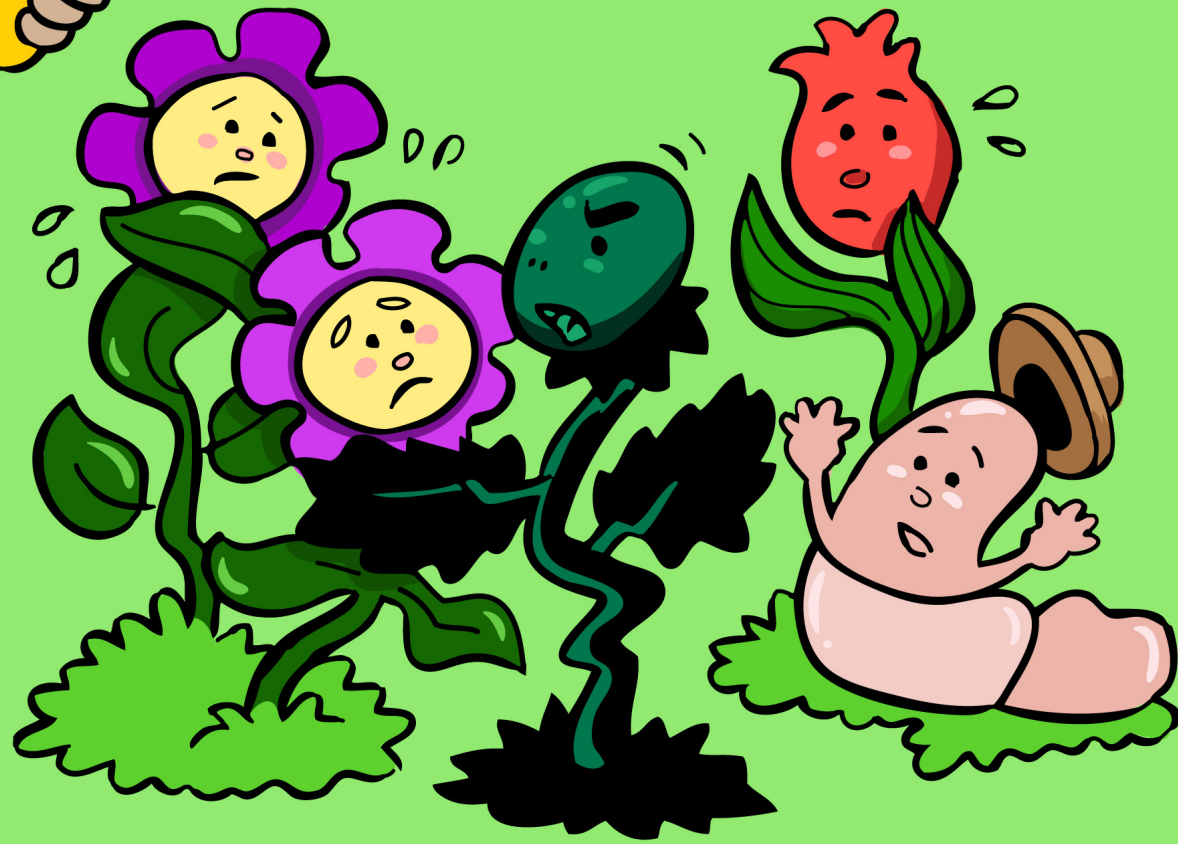


"DID YOU SAY WEEDS, WORMY?"

"YES, LOOK!"

"I DON'T LIKE UGLY WEEDS.  
THEY HURT MY PLANTS," SAID FRED.

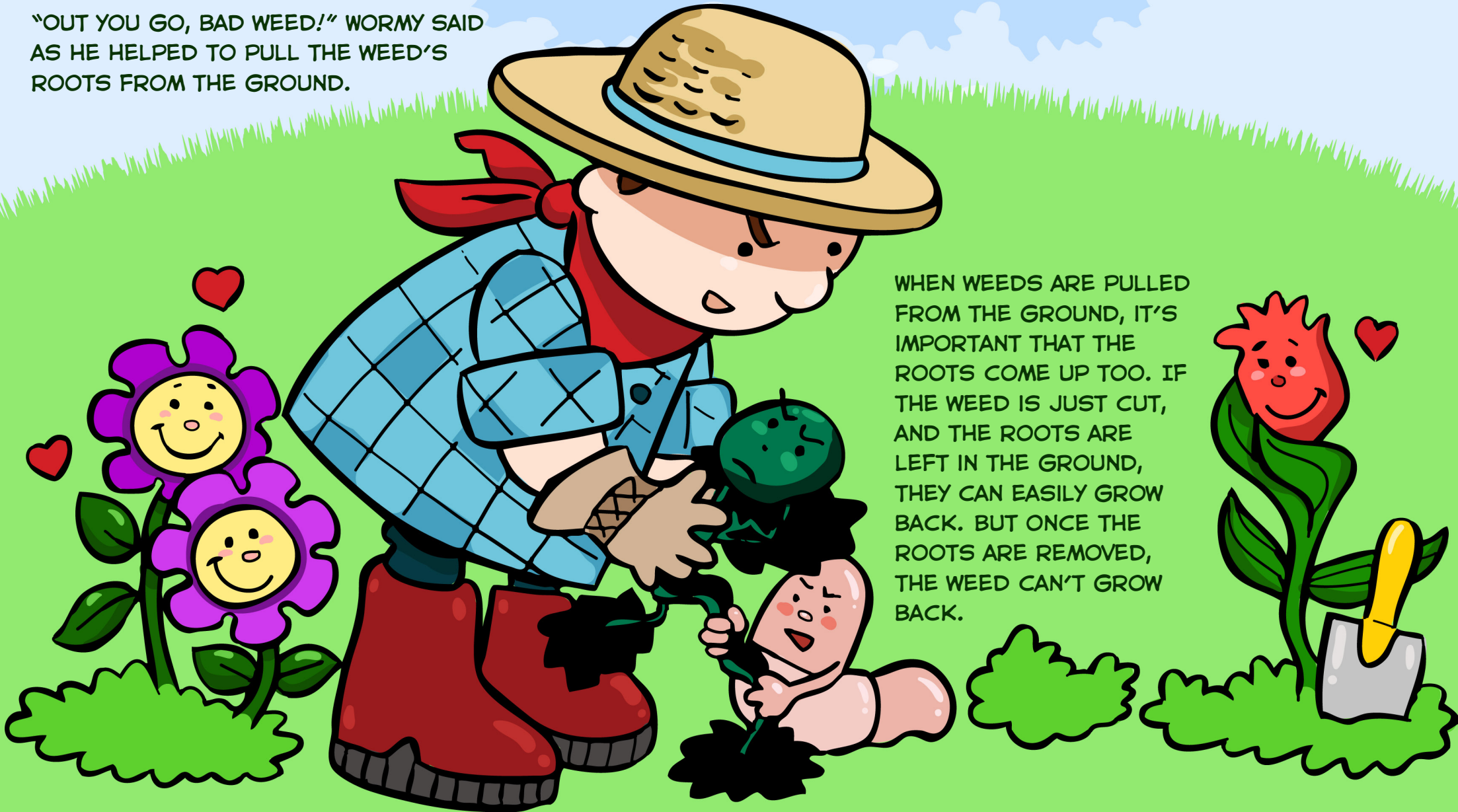
HE GRABBED HIS TROWEL AND HEADED TO WHERE  
THE WEEDS WERE CROWDING HIS FLOWERS.



"THESE WEEDS COULD RUIN MY WHOLE GARDEN!" MR. GARDENER EXCLAIMED. "I HAVE TO GET THEM OUT OF HERE!"

"OUT YOU GO, BAD WEED!" WORMY SAID AS HE HELPED TO PULL THE WEED'S ROOTS FROM THE GROUND.

WHEN WEEDS ARE PULLED FROM THE GROUND, IT'S IMPORTANT THAT THE ROOTS COME UP TOO. IF THE WEED IS JUST CUT, AND THE ROOTS ARE LEFT IN THE GROUND, THEY CAN EASILY GROW BACK. BUT ONCE THE ROOTS ARE REMOVED, THE WEED CAN'T GROW BACK.



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"I'M GLAD I GOT THE ROOTS OF THIS WEED OUT," MR. GARDENER SAID. "SOME OF THE WEEDS BROKE WHEN I WAS PULLING THEM OUT, AND I WILL NEED TO DIG THE ROOTS OUT NOW."

"OH YES, THERE ARE BIG WEEDS' ROOTS DOWN HERE THAT NEED TO BE DUG UP," WORMY SAID.

IT TOOK FRED A LITTLE TIME AND EFFORT TO GET ALL THE WEEDS OUT, BUT IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE HIS FLOWERBED WAS FREE FROM WEEDS.

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"HURRAY, WE GOT RID OF THOSE WEEDS! THE FLOWERBED LOOKS BETTER NOW THAT THE WEEDS ARE GONE," FRED SAID. "NOW MY FLOWERS CAN GET THE NOURISHMENT THEY NEED FROM THE SOIL, WATER, AND SUNSHINE, WITHOUT WORRYING ABOUT THE WEEDS STEALING FROM THEM."

"WE MUST DO THE SAME THING WITH OUR HEARTS BY KEEPING THEM CLEAN OF ANGRY AND NEGATIVE THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS. IF WE REMOVE THOSE SINS AND WEEDS FROM OUR HEART, THEN WE WILL BE HAPPIER AND MORE CONTENT. THEN OUR HEARTS CAN BETTER RECEIVE THE NOURISHMENT FROM GOD'S WORD, AND OUR FAITH CAN GROW STRONGER."

"I'M PROUD OF WHAT WE'VE DONE, WORMY!" FRED EXCLAIMED. "THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP! AND NOW IT'S TIME TO PLANT MORE SEEDS."

"NEW SEEDS!" WORMY SAID. "CAN WE PLANT STRAWBERRIES, PLEASE? I LOVE STRAWBERRIES!"

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"THAT'S A GOOD IDEA," SAID MR. GARDENER. "AH, WILL YOU LOOK AT THAT, WORMY! I BELIEVE I HAVE A PACK OF SEEDS RIGHT HERE. I KNOW JUST THE PLACE WHERE WE CAN PLANT THEM. WE'D BETTER GET STARTED BEFORE IT GETS TOO HOT."

HOW WELL DO YOU TEND THE GARDEN OF YOUR HEART? GIVE YOUR HEART WHAT IS NEEDED BY TAKING TIME WITH JESUS EVERY DAY. READ HIS WORD AND YOUR FAITH WILL BE STRONGER AND HEALTHIER. GOD'S WORD KEEPS YOU STRONG!

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