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### ***People Spot Missile: Weeds in the Garden***

My son Jim Moss, Jr. wrote the following in his weekly email newsletter. I have borrowed it with permission and added a few thoughts of my own.

“It sure has been a hot summer. The temperatures have been extreme and there has been precious little rain. The one up side to this weather pattern is I haven’t had to mow my yard very much. I hate cutting the lawn. It has to be one of my least favorite chores. But with all this dry weather, it hasn’t grown very much. Not only that...if I were to cut the grass down short it might burn out in this hot weather.

So...it had been almost a month since I had the mower out last. When I got home last night, though, I sensed maybe it was time for another cutting. The forecast was for rain the next few days and I figured I could cut the grass without killing it. As I performed my duty and walked the mower over the lawn, I noticed that the grass was still relatively short. It was the weeds that were growing. Obviously, I hadn’t paid much attention to my lawn in the past month, and in that time the weeds went wild. They were everywhere, and they were growing and spreading rapidly. I tried to pull what I could, but it became apparent to me that I’m going to have to dedicate several hours to dealing with my weed problem sometime soon.

As I lamented over the weeds in my lawn, a strange thought came to mind. I wondered how many weed-like, random ideas were cluttering up my thought life. Jesus made it clear that this kind of thing happens all the time. He told a story about a farmer sowing some seeds. Some fell on the path. Some fell on the rocks. And some fell among the weeds. The weeds grew up and choked the life out of that little seedling. Jesus then went on to say the weeds are like the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth that choke the Word of God out of our life and make it unproductive. You know, as well as I do, there are lots of things that preoccupy our minds and prevent us from being all that God made us to be.

I realize it’s taken me a while to get to the point, but what I want to suggest to you is that we need to pay attention to what’s going on inside our heads. Just as the weeds go wild when we don’t attend to our lawn, so the sin in our life will run rampant if we’re not diligent about dealing with it. It’s vitally important that we use wisdom when deciding what to read, what to watch, what to listen to, or where to go because everything we expose ourselves to has the potential to help us or to hinder our spiritual progress

Maybe it’s time for you to take care of the weeds in your life...”

I know that Jim was referring to the sins that are always lurking in the background. However, when it comes to church, there are a lot of weeds lurking that would diminish the capacity of

your church to have an effective ministry.

When I hear a pastor tell me, “I am so busy I just don’t know what I am going to do!” My first question is, “What are you doing?” List your various tasks. There may be some very good assignments that are quite worthwhile but do nothing to help your church become what it might be. Please re-evaluate the top five time consumers on your agenda. Be very careful of the classic time wasters that can consume countless hours with no real value to the church. The internet is a classic. Pastors are in their office and appear to be working. They are playing on the web. It is an addiction and does little to add to the ministry of the church. A second can be the television. It was the number one time waster a couple of decades ago but has slipped to second behind the internet. There are certain people who can chew up countless hours of your time with little or no benefit to them or the church.

I will never forget a pastor who shared he was very involved with a children’s organization. It was a very good one. I asked how much of his time was invested. He commented that 50% of his time was with that organization. I suggested that was not what his church was paying him to do. Though the effort was noble, it was not the right use of his time.

I remember a pastor who came to visit me in my office. He announced that his purpose for being there was to disrupt my day. I listened for some time until I concluded that his announced purpose was his real purpose. I asked him to leave so I could complete an assignment that had a deadline for that day.

I know I sound like a broken record. But one of the biggest weeds in a pastor’s garden is poor people skills. This weed destroys more ministries than any other. How do you treat people? Ask 3 or 4 of your key people to evaluate the manner in which you treat people. Abuse is rampant in our culture. In homes, marriages, schools, and the workplace abuse is everywhere. People don’t need to come to church and be abused. Take a look at the people who have left your church in the last three years. Is it possible they encountered abuse in the church and decided they had to leave to get away from it? This can be very true in small churches.

Another weed growing in the pastor’s garden is the inability to delegate assignments that others can do. Sometimes this is driven by the need to be in control. A pastor can multiply their time exponentially by setting free appropriate tasks that others can do. Of course that means training them and encouraging them as well.

What are the weeds in your ministry garden that would destroy your church’s capacity to function?

***A Thought: “...The weeds you fertilize are the ones that will grow” Jim Moss, Sr.***

*I am now available to present “The Role of the Church in the Civil War”, “Starting a New Service”, “Churches Have Personalities”, “People Spots”, “Does Your Church Really Care About People?” and “A Christian Perspective on Leadership Skills.” “Stewardship and Managing Debt” jm Volumes 1, 2, 3, and 4—“A History of the Civil War as Presented by the Church Advocate!” are now available. It is a history without the varnish of revision.*

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