

Are You Growing Grass or Killing Weeds?
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There was a pastor who was considering calling ChemLawn to take care for his weed-infested lawn, only to have them refuse to take him as a client because his lawn was so bad. He was about to accept the offer from a member of his church who had volunteered to totally remove his old lawn and start a new one, when a farmer gave him some advice: Don't worry so much about getting rid of the weeds. Just grow the grass, and the grass will take care of the weeds. The pastor took his advice and did all he could do to grow "the good stuff". After several years, his lawn was in top shape.

The pastor had to ask himself about what would be his primary focus - growing grass or killing weeds. He decided to concentrate on the positive rather than the negative. He decided to focus on growth instead of pouring his time and energies and resources into killing off weeds.

The parable of the wheat and the weeds found in Matthew 13:24-30 counsels us to focus on the harvest. There will be weeds and thorny things amongst us, but they will be sorted out in the end. Taking this approach not only concentrates our energies on the positive, it safeguards us from bad judgment calls.

It used to be that when individuals suffered from sinus infections, allergies, or pollen sensitivities, their physicians sent them to the arid Southwest. But transplants from the North began to miss their old environments. Fed up with front yards of weedy, scraggly sagebrush, junipers, cactus, and scrub grass, people began ripping up and rooting out the native vegetation and sowing great swaths of Kentucky blue grass and other plants from "back home".

These regionally unsuited plants required huge amounts of precious water and fertilizer to grow in the thin desert soil, and provided a new home for mites, ticks and mosquitoes that had previously been unknown in that region. Other things also changed. These plants brought with them their familiar loads of pollen and other airborne goodies that soon had all the Southwest sinus refugees sneezing, coughing and wheezing as though they had never left home. By getting rid of the "weeds," they created an environmental disaster.

Without a doubt, there are honest-to-goodness, downright worthless weeds out there. And we all know how soul-sapping it can be to be in an environment or work situation where weeds are rampant. Dealing only with the thorns and chaff, handling the negative comments, and dodging the nasty barbs zinged at us can use up a lot of energy. In the midst of all of these weeds, we have a decision to make as to what will be our primary focus. We can grow grass or we can fight weeds. We can focus most of our energies on growth and good things, or we can pour all of our energies into fighting the weeds.

Remember the farmers' advice: "Grow the grass and the grass will take care of the weeds." Jesus does not intend the body of Christ to be a hothouse flower. It is to live in the world, amongst the weeds, learning how to survive in the presence of their negative impact and energy. Pulling the weeds is not what we are about. Sometimes we may even find that what we thought were weeds will turn out to be unexpected flowers and blessings in our midst. Growing wheat, growing bread for the world, growing souls is the primary task of each Christian and each church.