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Are You Root Bound?

by Teresa Hampton

Two or three times a year my mother comes to visit us to help me with gardening. We usually begin with tending to the plants and flowers. Once she came upon a sad looking potted plant and said, “This plant is root bound.” She went to work taking it out of the pot that was too small, and loosening some of the roots. She got a bigger pot, put in the plant, and added new potting soil. Last, she added plant food and water. In the coming days it flourished.

Did you know that potted plants are not the only things that can become root bound? People, families, and churches can become root bound, too.

How do you know if you are a person that is spiritually root bound? If you become so wrapped up in yourself that you neglect to serve others, study the Bible, worship consistently, or share the good news with others, you are probably root bound. *No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon* (Matt. 6:24).

How do you know if your family is root bound? If it is focused solely on its desires and achievements, it might be root bound. If the parents are bound by materialism, wrapped up in social activities or hobbies, they may be root bound. If the children are consumed with social events and academic pursuits, to the neglect of spiritual things, they may be root bound. If the family prioritizes worldly things, leaving little time for home Bible study, faithful worship, and church activities that build godly relationships, they are probably root bound. *Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you* (Matt. 6:33)

How do you know if your church family is root bound? If it is satisfied with “the way things have always been,” and not open to new Bible-based ideas and plans, it is probably root bound. If it is controlled by a few members who insist on having their way, it is probably root bound. If it is comfortable with feel-good, milky preaching, it is severely root bound. *Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity...* (Hebrews 6:1a).

What will fix the problem? They do not need to be repotted. They need to repent and refocus on spiritual things. They should end friendships and activities that are spiritually toxic, and surround themselves with good soil, that is, hearts that are anxious to receive God’s word and please Him. They should prioritize serving others. Finally, they need to immerse themselves in God’s word, the living water, allowing it to guide every thought and action of the individual Christian, the family, and the church. These things are sure to fix or *prevent* the root bound problem and cause them to flourish!

Today’s Verse: *I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind;* (Phil. 3:14-15a).

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