

## Roots for Lives to Thrive

Community

Integrity

Respect

Love



We learn from God's Word, the Bible, that God is our Creator (*Genesis 1*). Because of God, we "live and move and have our being" (*Acts 17:28*). God "did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness" (*Acts 14:17*). These Bible passages show that God has designed all of us to have lives that do more than just survive. . . He wants us to **thrive!** "Thrive" means to "prosper or flourish".<sup>1</sup> But how can we thrive? If we look to the analogy of a tree, we can see that we are like trees, and that we can thrive just like trees thrive (*Psalms 1*).

- First, **trees can position themselves to thrive if they firmly plant their roots into the ground.**

God tells us in the Bible that the roots of **community**, **integrity**, **respect**, and **love** are supports that can keep us firmly planted throughout life. Remember, God wants everyone to have these roots. . . even those of you who don't believe in Him. The Creator knows best, He loves us, and He wants us to thrive! These roots are for us. . . not against us! God's not hiding other roots that can keep us stable in life. Instead, He wants to protect us from going after destructive, fake roots! In the Bible, God exposes and calls out these destructive, fake roots for what they really are: they're called sin. Sin is a rebellion against God and His good, beautiful, and perfect design for life. Sin comes in so many different forms, and these are just a few of them: living just for ourselves, lying, disrespect, and hatred. . . the exact opposites of the roots of community, integrity, respect, and love. We were born sinners (*Psalms 51:5*), and all of us have sinned (*Romans 3:23*). Sin promises that it will bring us stability in life, but God warns that sin separates us from Him and that it actually brings destruction and eternal death (*Romans 6:23*). Going back to the tree analogy, sin is like the fungal tree disease called heart rot. Heart rot attacks the inner heartwood of a tree and rots it out until the tree is so weak at its core that it can be felled by a mere, small shove! We shouldn't be surprised when the heart rot of sin causes only chaos, death, and grief for ourselves and those around us. But we should be surprised that even though we are still sinners, God sent us a source of life so we could thrive (*Romans 5:8*)!

- Second, **trees will only thrive if their roots dig deep and find water, a source of life.**

However, it's not enough for trees to just have a great root system. Even dead trees have a roots system! If trees want to thrive, their roots must dig deep and find water, a source of life. Without water, the trees are certainly not thriving, and if the trees' roots don't find water soon, they will die one day! In the same way, even if we have the roots of **community**, **integrity**, **respect**, and **love**, the bad news is that one day we'll still die for all of eternity if our roots don't dig deep and find a source of life. The Gospel -the good news!- is that God the Father loved the world so much that He sent us a source of life: His Son, **Jesus**. The Gospel is that Jesus was born on earth, He lived a perfect life, He died for our sin, and God rose Jesus from the dead so that we can be saved from sin and death! If we believe the Gospel and follow Jesus as Lord of our lives (*Romans 10:9*), God gives us eternal life instead of eternal death (*John 3:16*). Jesus is the living water who can quench the deepest desire of every human being (*John 7:37-38*). Jesus is the only source of life (*John 14:6*). **The only way we can thrive is by having a relationship with God that is rooted in Jesus** (*Colossians 2:6-7*)! Whether you believe in God or not, whether your life is filled with right choices or wrong choices, these truths *still* stand: God is your Creator, you are alive right now because of Him, He loves you, and He wants you to have roots for a life to thrive in Jesus!

<sup>1</sup> Merriam-Webster Dictionary.



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 **COMMUNITY:** a chosen group of people that we do life with.

“And though a man might prevail against one who is alone,  
two will withstand him- a three-fold cord is not quickly broken.” (Ecclesiastes 4:12)  
Therefore, because we are better together . . . **we will be together.**

How can we thrive in being together?

- We will not be on our phones during group activities.
- We will understand when decisions are made for the good of the group.
- We will participate with the group instead of being on our own and doing our own thing.
- We will be substance-free at all youth events and activities (drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and vaping).

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 **INTEGRITY:** “. . . choosing (to do) what is right over what is fun, fast, or easy.”<sup>2</sup>

“Whoever walks in integrity walks securely,  
but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out.” (Proverbs 10:9)  
Therefore, because having integrity brings security in life . . . **we will pursue integrity.**

How can we thrive in pursuing integrity?

- We will tell the truth even when it’s hard.
- We will do what is right even when no one is watching.

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 **RESPECT:** “caring about someone else’s feelings, wishes, rights, and traditions.”<sup>3</sup>

“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to the m. . .” (Matthew 7:12)  
Therefore, because respecting others makes it easier for them to respect us. . . **we will respect one another.**

How can we thrive in respecting one another?

- We will understand that being part of Bethany Youth is a privilege, not a right.
- We will listen to and follow the directions of the Youth Leadership Team (the Y.L.T.)
- We will stay on the property and in the room(s) the Y.L.T. has chosen until the event is over.
- We will follow the wishes of the owner when it comes to their property and their belongings.
- We will show social responsibility by cleaning up after ourselves so that others don’t pay the price.
- We will have fun when it is time to have fun, and we will be serious when it is time to be serious.

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 **LOVE:** caring for someone when they’ve wronged us or haven’t earned our respect yet.

“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.” (1 Peter 4:8)  
Therefore, because love covers all of our wrong choices . . . **we will love one another.**

How can we thrive in loving one another?

- We will include everyone even when we don’t know them, they are different than us, or they have wronged us in the past.

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<sup>2</sup> Brené Brown.

<sup>3</sup> Merriam-Webster Dictionary.