

e-KardíaGram

*Your Heart.
God's Beat.*

"I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you." (John 15:1-3 NLT)

Mouths and vines have something in common. In the same way that grapevines are not optimally productive with too many branches, mouths sometimes do not function as they should with too many teeth. Recently our son had his "wisdom" teeth—those often pesky third molars—removed. As far as I can tell, the only thing about them that seems "wise" for people who have them is the decision to take them out. Though the experience is not one our son wishes to repeat, over the long term his mouth will be better off. Wisdom teeth can significantly compromise oral health because of their propensity to erupt at odd angles and to crowd their neighbors (sounds a lot like the growth of branches on a vine!). They also are more prone to decay than other teeth because their posterior position makes them more difficult to brush and floss. So, in a sense, "pruning" of the wisdom teeth—removing them with a purpose—actually enhances, and in some cases restores, proper dentition.

God uses much the same process in us to enhance, and in some cases restore, our effectiveness in serving Him. With aspects of our lives erupting at odd angles and crowding the otherwise functional portions, the Dentist removing teeth is a metaphor that parallels the Gardener trimming branches to improve the performance of a vine. God does this for us, as John quotes Jesus, "by the message I [Jesus] have given you." When we read, study, **and** apply the Bible to life, pruning and purifying result, which lead to increased fruitfulness. Jesus isn't saying that God will cut us off; rather, His point is that God will, with His skillful snipping of whatever is unimportant, promote good fruit. Our son's teeth are better for the removal with a purpose. So will be your life.

—Jeff Russell

Dentistry/Oral Surgery

e-KardíaGram is produced by The Kardía Foundation © 2012 The Kardía Foundation
(A Ministry of Artists in Christian Testimony International) www.kardia.org
We connect the Christian faith and healthcare, equipping Christian healthcare workers to
integrate their faith and practice

To subscribe, go to <http://bit.ly/5r5uTM>

Written by Jeffrey A. Russell, PhD, ATC

This electronic publication may be forwarded in its original format with proper credit given

