

Forest/Tree/Praise Theme – The Trees of the Field

DEVOTIONAL/LESSON STARTERS & WORKSHOP IDEAS

Add in your own points, illustrations, explanations, and relating Bible verses.

Only you can Prevent Forest Fires!

- This has been our national slogan for our forest service in the States for a very long time.
- As Christians, we are the only ones who can prevent fires in our own lives too.
- You guessed it! Those tongue forest fires.
- Some of those get way out of control and they *could* have been prevented. We could have stopped them!
- We as individuals are the ones that need to keep a handle on our own lives and our own tongues.
- When we have problems with our tongues, those fires seem to burn up all our praise and worship to the Lord.
- If we continue to “burn”, all we will have left is scorched earth. That’s not much of an offering of praise.
- Proverbs 26:20
- James chapter 3
- Proverbs 15:4
- Proverbs 21:23

Go Climb a Tree

- The story of Zacchaeus
- Luke 19:1-10
- Zacchaeus was looking for Jesus.
 - Luke 19:3,4
 - Zacchaeus used what was at his disposal to find Him so he climbed a tree.
 - Do we use all means at our disposal to keep focused on our worship time?

- He didn't allow how short he or how many people were in the crowd to slow him down.
 - How about us? Do we allow things to get in our way of meeting with Jesus and praising and worshipping Him?
- Zacchaeus was waiting for Jesus.
 - Luke 19:4 ("...for he was to pass that way")
 - Zacchaeus went to a place where he knew Jesus was going to come.
 - How about us? Do we go where Jesus is going to pass by? Do we go to our Bible? Do we go to prayer?
 - He was prepared.
 - Are we prepared to see Jesus in our worship and praise?
- We may have to climb a tree to see Jesus.
 - In other words, we may have to make an effort to have our Bible and prayer time. We need our quiet time with the Lord.
 - We have to be where Jesus is to see Him. Not that Jesus isn't always with us, but we have to make a concerted effort to meet Him in worship, praise, and prayer.

Trees that Produce

- The tree is known by its fruit.
- Each tree bears a particular fruit. Christians should bear the fruit of the Spirit.
- Galatians 5:22,23
- A tree needs water, nutrients in the soil, pruning, pest control, protection from frost, and other things.
- Our Christian lives need the Living Water, the richness of God's Word, cutting back of sin, protection with prayer, and other things to produce healthy fruit.

Workshop Topics

- *Avoiding the Mistakes of Barking up the Wrong Tree* – Avoiding making assumptions. Finding a matter out before you speak or take action. Using wisdom in decisions. Knowing your Bible. Knowing doctrine and what you believe (not what people tell you to believe). Proverbs 15:14; Proverbs 14:18; Proverbs 19:2; Proverbs 4:7; 2 Timothy 2:15
- *Cutting out the Dead Wood in my Forest* – Getting rid of things that hinder praise and worship in our lives. Cutting back old growth can in turn help us to be healthier and grow more. Bitterness, grudges, sin, and things that aren't really sins but just get in our way of serving Christ, and maybe even ways of doing things. Those all need to be chopped down and cleared out of our lives.
- *Where's the Forest? All I see are Trees!* – Not seeing the forest for the trees? Are you letting the little things that make up life hinder you from seeing your future, your goals, and what is important? Do you allow little things within the church and between other Christians to slow you down from the purpose of living your life for Christ----to share God's love? Do you see only individual imperfect Christians and not the body of Christ? Begin looking at the big picture. There are people out there that need the love of Christ and they need us as the whole body of Christ to share the Gospel with them.
- *Timber!* – What seems to be falling around you? Under the weight of stress? Financial issues? Relationship issues? Allow God's strength to sustain you. Psalm 34:18
- *If a Tree Falls in a Forest* – Know that saying? "If a tree falls in a forest, does it make a sound?" Are you bearing pain that only you and the Lord know about? Just because other people aren't aware of it, doesn't mean it still doesn't hurt and give you pain. It does make a sound in your life. You feel the vibrations. You know the

crash has happened. Allow others to pray for you. You don't always need to share all the details, but let others know you have a need. Let them help because prayer is a powerful thing. Galatians 6:2; Matthew 18:19

- *Being Done with Being Done up Like a Christmas Tree* – Taking a look at pride and how it draws attention to us (the “me” or “I” syndrome). It’s like decorating ourselves with our own ornaments. We are not suppose to shine a light on ourselves, but on Christ. Pride can take away our joy and dedication to serve the Lord, to praise Him, and to worship Him. Proverbs 16:18; Proverbs 18:12; Galatians 6:3; Philippians 2:3; 1 Corinthians 13:4
- *Hanging on to my Family Tree* – Taking a look at our royalty in Christ. We have a wonderful heritage. If we have accepted Christ, we are children of God. It doesn’t matter who we are on this earth, but we have a wonderful God that reaches down and wants us. He cares for us and wants us as part of His family. John 3:16; John 1:12; 1 John 3:1,2; Romans 12:5; 1 Peter 2:9, 10
- *Branching Out*– John chapter 15. Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. Branch out to spread the love of Christ.
- *Growing Hearts of Oak when you Feel like a Wispy Vine* – Learning to be solid (as an oak), strong, and unwavering in our faith. Life is going to be hard (John 16:33) but we are going to have to learn how to live and live joyfully in our hearts in order to move forward. It takes strength which we only get from Christ. Nehemiah 8:1
- *Little Foxes in the Wood* – Song of Solomon 2:15 “Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines *have* tender grapes.” Little foxes take the tender fruit. They hinder the work of the Holy Spirit. Fox are cunning creatures. We have to be on guard.

- *Making Tracks* – The animals and critters leave their tracks in the snow or in the mud. We recognize them by their tracks. Are we leaving the footprints and tracks of a Christian? Would people know it was a Christian who took that trail or left that mark?
- *Keep on the Trail* – Making straight paths for our feet. (Hebrews 12:13) Following the Lord's leading. Not veering off from serving the Lord. Psalm 25:10; Psalm 23; Proverbs 3:5-6 Make sure you see those danger signs that say to "Keep on the Trail" "Don't go close to the ledge" "Stay on the designated route" "Steep drop offs" "Beware of cliffs".
- *Follow the Marked Trail* – Be inspired by the saints that have gone before. Study Hebrews chapter 11. Look what trails these mere humans took for their mighty God.

Make a Study of one of the following:

- Study Psalm 104
- Study the concept of Worship and Praise
- Study Creation
- Study a specific (or several) things that God created. So many things to choose from---animals, insects, rivers, the galaxy, and even the human brain. God made them all and made them all have specific jobs to do and gave them each unique characteristics. We have such a powerful God that we worship!
- Study Prayer
- Study a Specific Prayer
 - Prayer of Hannah (1 Samuel 2:1-10)
 - The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)

- Prayer of Jabez (1 Chronicles 4:9-10)
- Study the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 2:9 and chapter 3)
- Study the Children of Israel in the wilderness

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