

Greetings!

Have you ever aborted a harvest? I have. The events and stages of our lives come in seasons, and if we're to reap a harvest we must understand the seasons of our lives.

I was reading these past weeks, how two of my friends on Facebook are enjoying the fruit of their summer gardens. We exchanged a couple of comments as to how good it is to have "veggies" fresh from the garden, and I remembered an important lesson I learned about life, while tending my garden in Virginia.

Peas and a Weed Wacker

It was time for a break from the hot sun and garden work, when I decided to give Mama a phone call. She lived in Florida and I was in Virginia, but we kept in touch weekly catching up on how things were going with each other.

Each year she would send me a box of seeds from home to plant in my garden, and I wanted to let her know how they were doing. These were not ordinary seeds, but Big Boy, Zipper and Butter Peas along with several other varieties of beans and peas that you couldn't obtain where we lived. Every summer I looked forward to the delight of eating fresh southern peas and beans that became my prized possession and the envy of other gardeners in our neighborhood.

It was the middle of July and I had just finished my Saturday morning weeding, when I sat down with my glass of sweet tea in the cool of the air-conditioning to make the call. I took her down my list of morning accomplishments and then expressed my disappointment in the Big Boy peas, which were not blooming. All the other peas and beans were sprouting little pods full of blooms, but the Big Boys were nothing but huge bushes, with not a single bloom in sight. Thinking I couldn't allow something to take up so much room in my garden and not produce a harvest, I retrieved my weed-wacker. Soon pieces of green were flying into the air as I attacked the plants with gusto. Fortunately, for the peas that were left standing when I took my break, I had started my *pea whacking* late in the morning.

When Mama began her tirade, you would have thought I had committed a cardinal sin. Not since I was a teenager, doing some things I shouldn't have been doing, had I received such a scolding. "Son, Big Boy Peas are late bloomers!" – Somehow I don't think she was just talking about the peas. – "They're the last thing in the garden to bloom, so leave them alone!" Taking my verbal whipping with as much dignity as I could muster, I returned to my pea patch to assess the damage and pray over the surviving peas.

More often than I care to admit, Mama was right; two weeks later, every *remaining* Big Boy plant was covered in big white blooms, and before summer's end, we were eating our fill of

peas. With our freezer full, I couldn't help but wonder how many more peas we would have harvested had I not brought out the weed-wacker.

Our lives are like gardens. We harvest what we plant, and our care for our garden determines its yield. However, our impatience often gets the best of us and we abort our harvest early on. Watching something day upon day, without *seeing* any sign of a harvest, is difficult and requires us not to *prejudge* the outcome. Solomon said there is a season, a time for everything. God works in seasons, as is evidenced in His creation, and understands the importance of how time works in the producing of our maturity.

In our fast-paced society, we gather the harvest before it is ready and allow it to age in trucks and on the shelves of our stores. Anyone raised in the countryside will tell you that fruit gathered when mature, and fresh from the garden, always tastes better than "store-bought". Since the process of farming is not common to most of us, we have forgotten the necessity of allowing each variety of plant to mature in its own time.

We have a choice in our lives, we can rush the process and learn to be satisfied with what we get, or we can wait for God's best – *in its time*.

And that's just a thought . . .

My Final Word

The medical community has broken individuals out into two groups when considering the possibility of someone having a heart attack; Type A and Type B.

Type A is impatient, time-conscious, controlling, concerned about their status and aggressive in their approach to most events in their lives. They become *stress junkies*. While Type B in contrast, is patient, relaxed and easy-going in their approach to life. Type A sees Type B as unmotivated and lazy, while Type B sees Type A as "control freaks", or "drama queens". I hope I have learned to live life somewhere in the middle.

I have discovered that knowing how to be patient while waiting for something is more a learned process than it is a gift; that knowing when to plant the seed, when to weed, and when to gather the harvest is understood best from our personal experiences. I can say this for sure, I have never forgotten my feeling of deep regret while looking down on my mutilated plants. As I grow older and look back on my earlier years, I wonder how anything survived my weed-wacker days.

Had Mama not stopped me while I was in the process of the total destruction of my peas, I would have never known the stages of growth for Big Boys. Since then, I have noticed that in life we often fail to listen to those who are trying to help us not abort the events that shape our maturity, thus resulting in a harvest.

So, while you're standing with the weed-wacker in your hands, maybe you should take a moment and look around to see if anyone is yelling for you to stop whacking your harvest!

Waiting for my harvest,

Chris

