

"LIFE THROUGH THE LENS"



BEFORE



AFTER

IT IS ABOUT STRENGTH

"Phormium Tenax" had stood there for many years. When its roots first sucked nutrients from the soil, it no doubt looked pretty harmless; in fact, even admired. But, then, across the years, it started to take over. Despite being trimmed, cut back, and trimmed again, each time, it seemed to re-assert itself, bigger and stronger and taking over more of the garden until a decision was made. The whole thing had to go! But how? Over the years, it had embedded itself so deeply that there was no way the owner could remove it. The answer? Bring in "Big John" with his "big tractor and chain"! In less time than it took to think about it, "Phormium Tenax" lay there, roots pointing at the sky, never again to harass the garden or the owner of the garden.

Paul, a religious leader, did a lot of harassing of other Jesus followers before one day being confronted by a risen Jesus. After dying on the cross, being buried in a tomb and coming alive, Jesus confronted Paul with, "Why are you persecuting me? Paul changed his thinking and wrote, "I know the excellence God wants of me, but still I can't do it. The power of sin within me keeps sabotaging my best intentions. I need help! I realise that I don't have what it takes. I can want it, but I can't *do* it. I decide to do good, but I don't do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway. My decisions, such as they are, don't result in actions. Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the better of me every time."
(Romans 7:17-20)

Paul was honest and recognised his weakness in trying to change. He knew he needed help, a helper stronger than whatever held him back from changing. Do you, like myself, cry out, "I know I shouldn't let worry take root, but I do." Pride becomes impossible to dig out, and anger often rules words and actions where I know I should be spreading peace and goodwill.

God tells me He loves me and I am precious, and at times, I believe it, but then a root ball of self-doubt strangles that belief and feelings of unworthiness grow afresh. Learn like Paul, be honest with yourself (and God) and admit that each day, these woody roots that separate from God and his love come. I need a strength greater than mine to pull them out. To nurture and grow in me the thoughts and actions pleasing to a loving God, as in saying, "I believe You love me, I believe You care. I believe you want to help me be strong. Thank you!"

Jesus promises to use his strength and His love to help you be stronger and live the way he has planned for you. He said, " You can be sure that I will be with you always. I will continue with you until the end of time." **(Matthew 28:20)**. Talk to Him about where you need help and strengthening in your life.

Cheers, Kevin.