



LWML CNH CHRISTIAN LIFE LINE

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BLOOM WHERE YOU ARE PLANTED

Is this sentiment in the Bible? The sentiment, yes, but not the exact words. This popular phrase means to be fruitful, make the best of life when it throws lemons at you, and do what's right, even when it's difficult. An American graphic artist and illustrator made the phrase famous with her book: *Mary Englebreit: The Art and the Artist* – but no, she did not originate the phrase. Paul Harvey, an American radio broadcaster, used the phrase a decade before Mary's book, yet he was not the originator of it either.

SO WHAT DOES THIS PHRASE MEAN?

1. Be fruitful, blossom, become all you were created to be. Truly charity has no limit. The love of God has been poured into our hearts by His Spirit dwelling in each one of us, calling us to a life of devotion and inviting us to bloom in the garden where He has planted and directing us to radiate the beauty and spread the fragrance of His Divinity. In the book of Genesis, after God created Adam and Eve, *He blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it..."* Genesis 1:28a

*Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD.
He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream,
and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green,
and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.
Jeremiah 17:7-8*

Here Jeremiah has cited the Bible! The man who trusts in the LORD constantly meditates on the Word of God (Psalm 1:2). Jeremiah teaches us that the Scriptures encourage us to be all God made us to be.

2. Make the best of what you have when life throws lemons at you. Using the phrase this way encourages resilience. Sometimes life is difficult. Things don't always go according to plan. Even in less than wonderful situations, we have control over how we respond. Blooming where we are planted is to make the choice to respond in a godly manner, to demonstrate that we trust in Our Father. The other side of the issue is that God gives you the lemons – He is testing you, and God desires to purify the faith and to empower the faith to live under adverse circumstances, in the faith that depends on His praiseworthy faithfulness.

When God exiled the Israelites to Babylon, they were in a less than wonderful situation. But God told them, in a way, to bloom where they were planted for that time.

*Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I
have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in
them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and
daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage,*

that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. Jeremiah 29:4-7

3. Do what's righteous and just, even when it's difficult. Perhaps that is why Paul gives this instruction, which is another place we find the sentiment of blooming where we are planted. God has given us vocations – the spots in which we are planted – and in those places, grow and serve.

Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. Were you a bond servant when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) For he who was called in the Lord as a bond servant is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a bond servant of Christ. You were bought with a price; do not become bond servants of men. So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God.

I Corinthians 7:20-24

4. Sometimes perseverance in difficult circumstances is needed for growth in faith. But the bond slaves whom Paul was addressing didn't need to think they were fated to remain there for life. Blooming where you are planted doesn't mean you can't improve yourself or must stay stuck in an awful place. Let me remind you of the line above – *if you can gain your freedom* (vs 21). The Bible is full of words encouraging us to grow and change. There are times to bloom where we are planted, and times for us to be transplanted so we can bloom even better elsewhere. Just follow the Lord as He leads and guides through His Word and through the counsel of Christian friends.

So when are we Christians like plants blooming? It is our intention to demonstrate God's love and His expectations for His children. The Holy Spirit plants the Word of God in the Christian (compare James 1:18); the seed is nurtured and grows into a beautiful plant as we are fed and strengthened by God's Word and the blessed Sacrament of Holy Communion. The Holy Spirit has grafted us onto Christ in Holy Baptism; and without Christ we can do nothing (John 15:5). We can also feed the faith of those around us, no matter how old or new that faith may be, sharing the seed of God's Word.

We are white as snow because of the crimson blood of Jesus. Our sins are gone. We are free. While we still live surrounded by sin as well as add to the sin in our world, we are also forgiven children of the Lord. We are washed clean in His eyes and given eternal life in heaven with all the saints who have gone before us.

So, while we are still "sheltered-in-place," let's bloom and grow where we are planted. Be in the Word so that the seeds of God's love that you drop are pure, strong, and seen by those near us.

Dear Lord, You have created us to share Your love and Your Word with those around us. Help us to be bold and bright so that we attract others to You. Move us to bloom and grow where we are at this time and in this place so our lives glorify You. In the holy name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Adapted from LWML 2015 Katy Gifford, Falls City, Nebraska and Danielle Bernock, author/speaker