

The Higher Calling of Plants

I am an anxious person. I worry and fret over inconsequential things. I have mental breakdowns when my schedule breaks down. However, a walk through nature will always put me in a better mood, no matter how bad of a day I've been having. It has taken me years to figure it out, but I think I know why.

Uncertainty sends me down this emotional rollercoaster. Will I have enough time to turn my report in? Will my husband and I have enough money to make it through our next year of school? Then, those worries turn into negative absolutes. I *won't* have enough time to get my homework done. I *won't* be able to get that dream job after college. These emotions and thoughts physically affect my being. No drive to do homework. Lost appetite for food. Rapid breathing. Drowsiness. Once this ride is going, it is almost impossible to stop.

Some temporary solutions to these destructive events have been weighted blankets, comfort food, re-watching a favorite tv show, and on extremely rough days, being held in my husband's arms. These solutions ground me back to reality, but the effects are fleeting. The same thing will happen tomorrow.

One day, my counsellor suggested I find a plant or living thing to touch when I'm in these dark moods. I thought she was crazy. What's next? Healing crystals, exorcisms, opening up my chakras so I can enter into the Avatar State at will?

Somehow, my husband convinced me to give it a try.

The next stressful day, my husband wrapped me in a weighted blanket, turned on the tv, and set Vernon, the succulent, into my hands. At first, nothing really happened. I was still breathing quickly, and my thoughts still dug its claws into the irrational fear of somehow losing all our money and living in a box on the street.

However, the longer I stared at the plant, inhaling the sticky-sweet scent, feeling the clay pot in one hand, and running my fingers through the petals of the plant with the other, peace washed over me. At first, I thought it was the oxygen, but that didn't explain why my breathing was suddenly calm and the criticizing thoughts drifted away.

In that moment of clarity, the Spirit impressed upon me the purpose of plants.

After the earth was formed, the light separated from the darkness, the stars placed in the heavens, the waters divided from the land, plants were finally introduced into the world. God could have simply planted grass and called it good. Instead, he designed annuals and perennials, evergreens and oak trees. He created plants that climb, plants that crawl, plants that swim, and plants that soar. Some plants tantalize, desensify, immobilize, or fortify. Even with all this diversity, there are a couple core qualities that all plants carry.

Plants are pure. They absorb the negativity of the world. They photosynthesize fear and blossom benevolence. Feeling the energy of plants is different from feeling the energy of humans. Even though my husband does his best to comfort me, I can still feel all the excess emotions he unconsciously emits. I can tell when he is thinking about a problem at work he wants to solve. I watch his eyes as they stare off into nothing, thinking about what we are going to have for dinner instead of thinking about the crying and shaking and hyperventilating wife in his arms. Plants, on the other hand, aren't muddled with these emotions. Instead, they emit stability and serenity.

Plants are also resilient. I'm honestly surprised that with all my pessimistic emotions, Vernon has not shriveled up and killed over. By the grace of God, plants are able to take our burdens in exchange for tranquility, much like our Savior would if He were here with us. This is

why walking in the park, around campus, or through mountain trails makes me feel happier. The plants take my yoke and carry it with ease.

The world would be a much sadder place if plants were not given those godly qualities of stability and resilience. Walking through the gardens on campus, climbing a mountain, or sitting next to a potted plant would have very little effect on the state of our souls. This is why I feel God has created plants for multiple purposes.

Not everyone may have the same reaction to plants as I do, but much like how I have a testimony of the gospel, I have a belief that plants have the power to heal. They take our hardships and shower us with comfort. For those looking for a little peace, I recommend getting a plant or going for a walk through the gardens. Let the flowers and ferns, leaves and legumes lift the hands that hang down and carry the heavy heart to a holier haven.