



"The Bamboo Farmer" **an inspiring story of faith and perseverance**

Once upon a time there was a farmer. He lived in a farming community and had farmed, like his neighbors... for all of his life. As time passed by he became bored with farming traditional crops, he still loved farming but felt unchallenged. So he set about the business of researching alternative crops. Making a living and supporting his family was critical, so he wanted to make sure he made a wise choice. Therefore, he began reading, researching and speaking with experts with more knowledge than he before making his final decision.

After studying a variety of options, he decided on Bamboo. The climate, soil conditions and equipment at his disposal could make growing and harvesting bamboo a profitable business. He was convinced he was making the wisest choice and began making the changes needed to become a Bamboo Farmer.

Now remember, our farmer lived in a farming community. For generations his neighbors had all grown traditional crops like corn and wheat. You can only imagine how the idea of growing bamboo was received. Upon telling his fellow farmers his idea, they mocked him calling him foolish, all the time warning him of his impending peril. They were unwilling to accept change or progress. However, the farmer was unshaken, he had done extensive research and was confident of his knowledge. He would not back down from the belief that he could grow bamboo and even turn a substantial profit in the business.

Well, if you know anything about bamboo, you know that the first year it's been planted...nothing happens. You don't get so much as a twig or a leaf! His neighbors were ruthless. They had all harvested their crops while he had nothing at all to show for his efforts. He was undaunted and confident in his knowledge. But wait, there's more bad news. The second year nothing happens either, not a sign of a bamboo tree anywhere. Again he was forced to endure a second year of ridicule by his heartless neighbors. Still, he was unshaken in his confidence.

The third year came...and guess what? Bamboo, everywhere bamboo. His crop grew a foot a day! By the end of the summer he had a virtual bamboo forest. He harvested his crop and sold it for a huge profit. His neighbors were astonished. In fact, several who had once ridiculed him began to show interest in becoming bamboo farmers as well.

The farmer went on for many years enjoying the benefits of his new crop, bamboo. He and his family enjoyed a very happy and successful life, unafraid of growth, progress or change, confident and determined when facing challenges.

This story teaches us two lessons. First, when you have knowledge you have tremendous power. Knowledge gives you confidence to pursue your dreams and goals...regardless of what others think. Throughout history our most prolific leaders, inventors and businessmen were very often the subject of ridicule by their peers. It was their faith and single minded purposefulness that drove them to persevere and ultimately achieve their dreams.

The second lesson is that just because we don't see immediate progress, doesn't mean we should give up. The reason the bamboo tree doesn't grow until the third season is because it spends the first two years growing roots, building a foundation so that when it is ready to grow it will have the stability to stand tall reaching tremendous heights. Without those roots, the tree would fall over with the first strong wind. Had the farmer lost faith, had he not had confidence in his knowledge, he might have tilled the crop under during the first or second year and created disaster for himself and his family.

It's critical that we allow children to grow and develop at their own pace. We must understand that although there may not appear to be any changes on the outside, growth and progress is happening on the inside. We must be patient, have confidence and persevere, (like our farmer did in the story.)

