

# Leaning & Increasing Efficiency on the Farm

Matthew Dealy

Tobias Garden LLC, Hermosa, SD





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Why Lean?

For something Better

“We each have a work to do for God, whatever may be our occupation. Those who are on their farms are not to think that it would be a waste of time for them to plan to go out and visit their neighbors, and hold up before them the light of the truth for this time; for even if it does seem difficult to leave the farm work, yet we shall not lose financially because of spending time in helping others. There is a God in heaven that will bless our labors”

*-Ellen White Ms15-1909*

“But farmers themselves must get educated to give heed to the laws of life and health by regulating their labor, even if there is some loss in their grain or the harvesting of crops. Farmers work too hard and too constantly, and violate the laws of God in their physical nature. This is the worst kind of economy. For a day he may accomplish more, yet in the end he is a loser by his ill management of himself”

*-Ellen White Lt85-1888*

“Instead of rendering to God the means He has placed in their hands, many invest in more land. This evil is growing with our brethren. They had before all they could well care for, but the love of money or a desire to be counted as well off as their neighbors leads them bury their means in the world and withhold from God

His just dues. Can we be surprised if they are not prospered? If God does not bless their crops and they are disappointed? Could our brethren remember that

God can bless twenty acres of land and make them productive as one hundred, they would not continue to bury themselves in lands, but would let their means flow into Gods treasury. “

...

‘Take heed,’ said Christ, ‘lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life.’ Satan is pleased to have you increase your farms and invest your means in worldly enterprises, for by so doing you not only hinder the cause from advancing, but by anxiety and overwork lessen your prospects for eternal life”

*-Ellen White 5T 151, 1889*

“Watch in your family. Don’t speak a cross word. Don’t raise the ire of your children when you should not, because this will not reform them. Take time aside to converse with them and pray with them, and read the scriptures to them. What a work this is! This is what you want to do. Take time for it. You may say, my farm. Yes, but cannot God bless your farm better if you have a united family, to speak the same things, to work the same order? And will not the Lord let His rich grace rest upon you in wisdom and righteousness?”

*-Ellen White Ms 111-1909*

“The Lord would have all who are in His service to be learners. The tillers of the soil, the mechanics, the men who have learned their trades, are still to be learning better methods, expanding, enlarging in their ideas. Those who do not think they can learn anything are not the ones who can be a blessing in the enterprises in which we are engaged. Those who are willing to learn are wanted. God is continually leading and instructing.”

*-Ellen G. White, The Bible Echo, August 24, 1896*

“There will be [a] new presentation of men as bread winners, possessing educated, trained ability to work the soil to advantage. Their minds will not be overtaxed and strained to the uttermost with a study of the sciences. Such men will break down the foolish sentiments that have prevailed in regard to manual labor. An influence will go forth, not in loud-voiced oratory, but in real inculcation of ideas. We shall see farmers who are not coarse and rough and slack, careless in their apparel and of the appearance of their homes; but they will bring taste into farmhouses...”

...

“The cultivation of the soil will be regarded as elevating and ennobling. Pure, practical religion will be manifested in treating the earth as God’s treasurehouse. The more intelligent a man becomes, the more religious influence should be radiating from him. And the Lord would have us treat the earth as a precious treasure, lent us in trust.”

*-Ellen G. White, Lt47a-1895*

I propose that LEANING THE FARM is this:

- Allowing the farm to only control a pre-set portion of your life
- Looking at every step of your operation and asking, How can I better bring glory to God?
- Getting rid of all excess so that you can be a multi-purpose tool for God

Farming is a tool, not THE tool to teach:

- Temperance / Intemperance
- Laws of health / Violate laws of health
- Uniting of family / Breaking apart
- Financial stewardship / Self gratification
- Time management / Imbalance
- Christs Classroom / Devils laboratory
- Well ordered family / Disorganized

Eliminate Waste



# Types of waste

- Over production
- To many Varieties
- Over harvesting
- Over processing
- Defective products
- Motion
- Uneven production

# Over production

- So easy to do
- Affects every area of your farm / Life
- Farmers biggest temptation







# Defective Products

- Slows everything down
- Wastes space
- Mental drain
- Makes you produce excess, to make up for the garbage



# Value vs. Non Value-adding activities

- Folding Sheets- sleep better?
- Weeding
- Opening-closing greenhouse
- Harvesting tomatoes
- Watering in the rain
- Displaying at market
- Changing oil on delivery van
- Listening to me right now
- Looking for the fork to dig carrots
- Washing carrots

# Farm Design



Keep it small

Keep tools where you need them, not where you thought you put them.

Keep the tomato tools with the tomatoes, not in the tool shed across the farm, etc.



Start small, and get  
smaller from there

# Keep movement to a minimum

- Locate pack shed in a central location
- Keep fields close together
- Keep materials(row covers, etc.) close to where you use them
- Bigger greenhouses are easier to manage than lots of small ones
- Pay a friend to come out and track your movements for a day. Make a map and draw lines for all your movements. Try to eliminate as many as possible moving forward.



# Standardization

- Make all beds same size if possible
- Keep row covers, drip tape, hoop houses, etc the same size
- Make irrigation easy to switch around and move if need be.
- Make it so that you can grow in incremental steps

# Start Small

- Build one greenhouse. Once you have maxed it out then build another, and so on
- Don't borrow a bunch of money and experiment
- Put in your time learning from somebody who is really good at what you want to do
- Figure out your soil, market, limitations, etc. master them then move on

Seed → Transplant







# The Goal...

## Every seed germinates

- Do what it takes to get healthy starts
- Create the right environment
- Store seeds properly
- Starts seeds at proper times
- Use germination chamber
- Use smaller greenhouses in starts house to use less heat
- Water properly





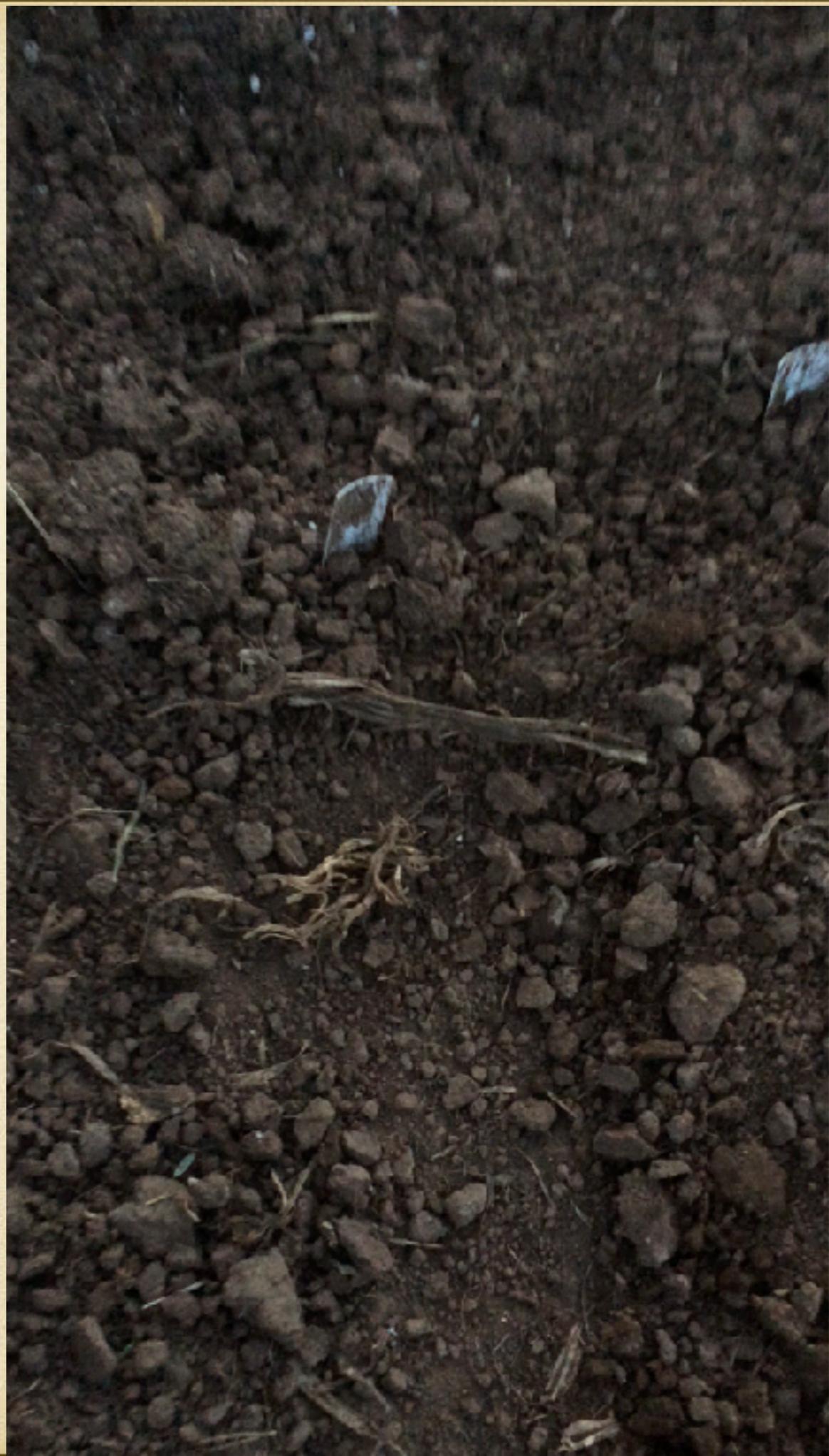
# Space to Grow

- Plant crops at the proper spacing so that they grow up together the same size
- More air flow and less disease
- More isn't always better
- Remember you want every seed to get to maturity fast
- Things are faster to harvest and pack when they are a consistent size













# Paper Pot Transplanter

- Extremely fast
- Economical compared to labor
- Allows for earlier plantings in spring
- Easier to control germination in a tray than in the field
- Simple technology
- It's a whole system that is really fast







Harvest → Sell

# Put the Work in Before Hand

- When you are harvesting salad is not the time to be weeding
- Keep tomatoes pruned so they are easy to pick
- Use the right watering method so everything is not covered in dirt
- Keep things weeded so that you can use the appropriate tools (salad harvester, etc)
- Make sure carrots are moist before harvest















# Keep Things at a Good Working Height

- I keep my trellis at 8'
- Trellis cucumbers, tomatoes, zucchini, summer squash, pole beans, cherry tomatoes
- Stay off ladders as much as possible when harvesting





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Water?



# What to Grow

- Grow what your customers want
- Try to cut down on varieties (maybe 5 varieties of tomatoes instead of 35)
- Don't be a Jack of all trades, master of none
- Find markets and let them pull the food from you, instead of you pushing it on them
- Grow crops in the shoulder seasons so that you can charge a premium

Put it Together

# Organize

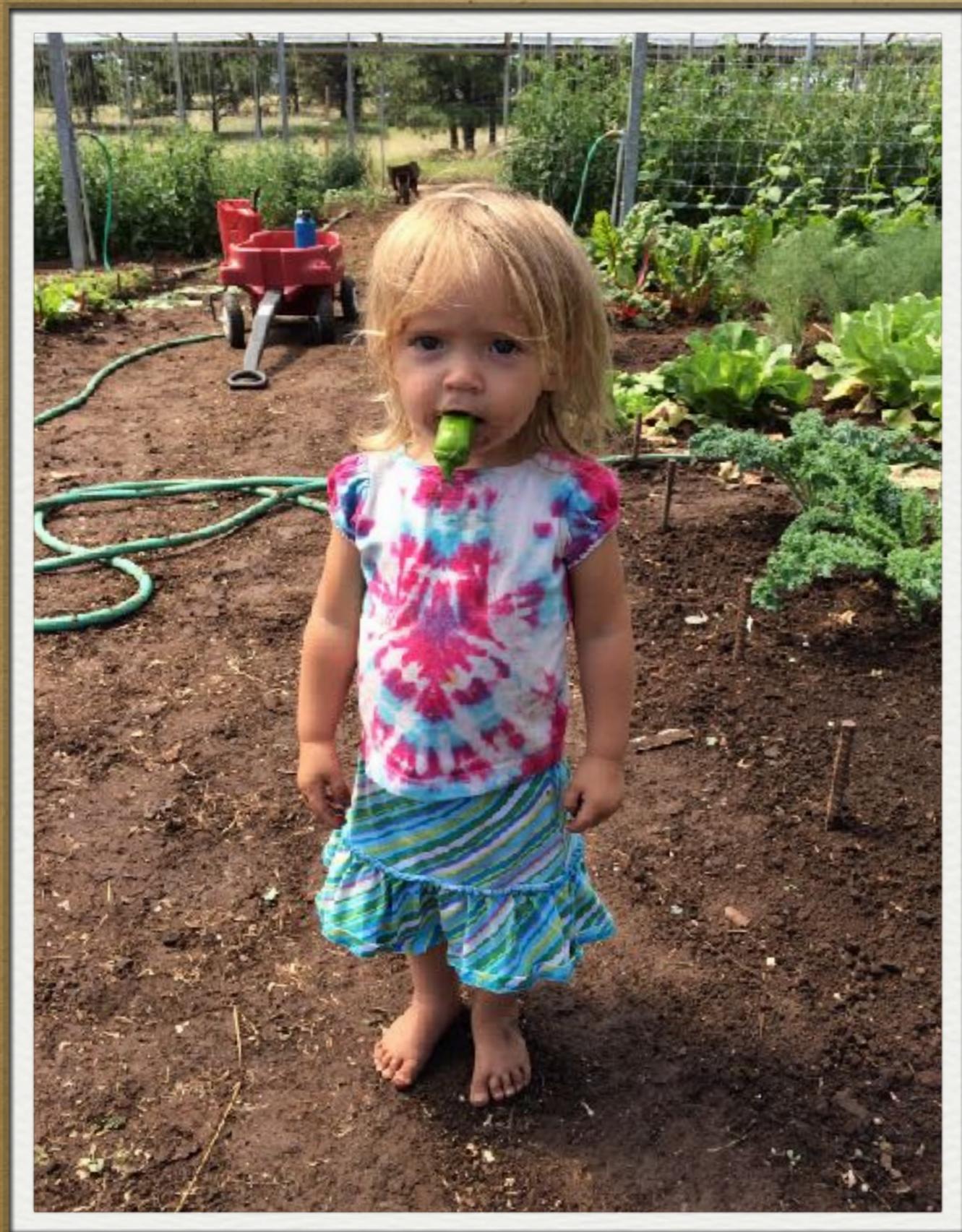
- Get rid of junk
- Get rid of time wasters (tools you don't use)
- Put things where you use them, and make a system to make sure they get put back
- Find a beginning farmer and give them all the stuff you are not using anymore
- If you haven't used it in 6 months, it might be time to migrate it out

Purge Your life

# Reset priorities

- Seek the Lord and see where you are out of balance and begin to change now
- Make boundaries and stick to them (often time constraints can be a big blessing) 45 hour work week in peak summer?





Live in the  
Moment!



How you  
do  
anything  
is how you  
do  
everything



Systems in the house

# Zero Out at the End of the Day

- Wash station clean and ready for the next day
- All tools put back and ready for action
- Dishes done, house vacuumed, every thing as ready for the next day as possible
- When you get back from market clean it out so you are ready for next time

# Make Systems

- Make a system! When an improvement comes along, tweak it and keep going
- Don't be afraid of failure
- Just do something, then stand back, take a look at it and improve it. Keep doing this and it will only get better and better

# Be a Team

- Farming is a lifestyle help with all aspects
- Teach your family by example in all areas
- Don't be afraid to step away from the farm for a day if need be.

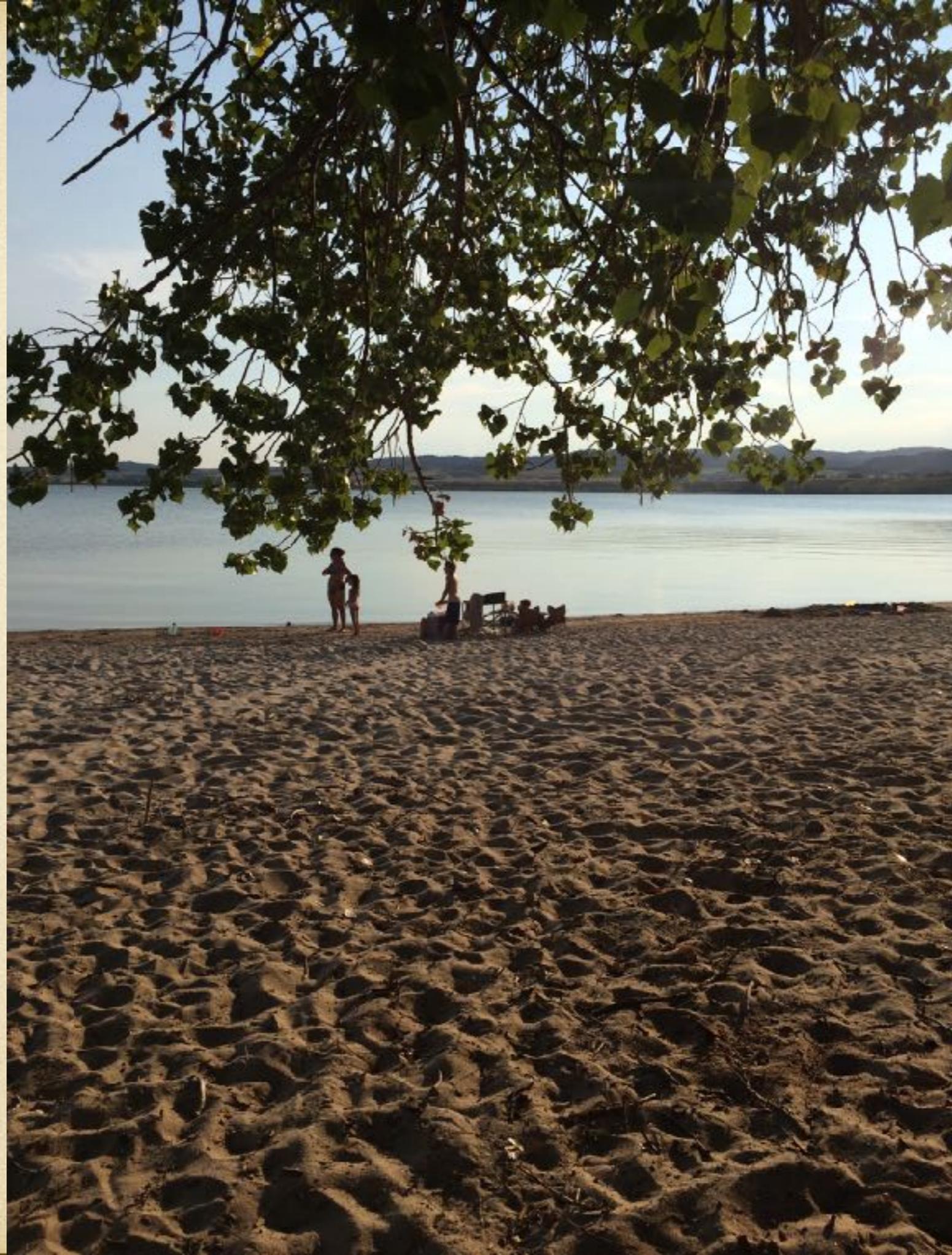




Don't be afraid to try  
new things



Work Hard and Don't  
Forget to Have Fun



# Lets Purpose to Be:

- Ever improving
- Allowing Christ to teach us new methods
- Creating the appropriate sized farms to have a balanced life
- Setting limits and boundaries for our work as to not give the devil a foothold
- Slowing down enough to hear God walking and talking with us in the garden
- Using the garden as an appropriate tool to further the work that God has given us to do

# Further Study

- The Bible
- Ellen White
- Counsels on Agriculture. By John Dysinger
- *The Lean Farm* by Ben Hartman
- *The Lean Farm Guide to Growing Vegetables* by Ben Hartman
- *The Market Gardener* by Jean-Martin Fortier
- Never Sink Farm, Online course by Conner Crickmore.