

# Personal Transformation #3: Roots & Change

## General Purpose:

This session will look at a behavioral model that can help us apply practical wisdom when identifying the root causes underlying our sinful behaviors. This is a model that many have found helpful for both personal use, as well as when counseling others.

## THE THREE TREES MODEL<sup>1</sup>.

The Scripture uses the analogy of trees to depict a person's life.

### Matthew 7:16-18

*You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. (Matthew 7:16-18)*

1. **A Bad Fruit Thorn Tree** represents a person's ungodly responses to the different circumstances of life.
2. **A Good Fruit Tree** represents a person who trusts in the Lord and learns to respond in a godly manner to his problems. God's redemptive power at work in the heart and renewal by grace enables the person to respond in a godly manner to all circumstances.
3. **The Cross of Christ.** After describing how bad and good fruits look, Galatians 5:24 reveals the secret of moving from the tree bearing thorns to the one bearing fruit: "going through" a third tree - the CROSS.

*Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (Galatians 5:24)*

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<sup>1</sup> An adaptation of David Powlison Model and the Christian Counselling & Education, Philadelphia, PA.

## COMPONENTS OF THE MODEL

### 1. The Roots

- The roots represent the motivations behind our behaviors.
- They determine the health of the tree.

Romans 11:16, 18

*And if the first piece of dough be holy, the lump is also; and if the root be holy, the branches are too... remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.*

### 2. The Heat

- The sun represents the heat that circumstances bring into our lives.
- Circumstances don't generate the fruit they expose the fruit.

### 3. The Fruit

- The fruit represents our response to life's pressures.
- We respond with either "bad fruit" or with "good fruit".

Galatians 5:19-23

*Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

### 4. Consequences

- Depending on how we react to situations, others tend to respond back to us -- whether for good or for evil.
- This can set in motion a whole new set of circumstances, and the accompanying "heat" can start the process all over again.

## AN EXAMPLE OF THE MODEL

David's Responses to Bathsheba & Uriah (2 Samuel 11 & 12)

## 1. Bad Fruit Tree

- HEAT: He peers down to discover a beautiful woman, naked and bathing in his neighbor's backyard. He finds this provocative.
- BAD FRUIT: David took a married woman and had sex with her.
- BAD ROOTS: The Bible is not explicit about the root of David's behavior, but we can point to Nathan's exhortation to give us some clues. (2 Samuel 12)
  - Entitlement, he didn't consider that his position was a gift from God, but rather thought he could get what he wanted. (2 Sam 12:7-8)
  - He considered his own desires to be above God's Word. (2 Sam 12:9)
- CONSEQUENCES: Bathsheba got pregnant.
- MORE HEAT: Bathsheba's pregnancy, while her husband was on foreign soil, would cause David to be shamefully exposed.
- MORE BAD FRUIT: David had Uriah sent home under false pretenses. He deceived him, then got him drunk, hoping that Uriah would have sex with his wife and come to believe that the child was his own. Honorable Uriah refused to enjoy the comforts of home while his brothers were in the trenches. Then David sent him back to the front and involved his cousin, General Joab, in a plot to have Uriah deceitfully murdered.
- MORE BAD ROOTS: One of David's most remarkable traits had been his loyalty towards his men, but here he exposes his selfishness.
- MORE CONSEQUENCES: As a result of David's adultery, the child would die. And as a result of David's conspiratorial murder, his own beloved son would rise up against him in a fatal attempt to overthrow and kill his royal father.

## 2. The Cross

David was brought to his knees by the prophet, Nathan. When he was finally confronted, David repented sincerely and with appropriate godly sorrow. (see Psalm 51)

### 3. Good Fruit Tree

- **GOODROOTS:** David demonstrated trust in God’s character of justice and mercy after being confronted with his sin. He showed remarkable humility when the consequences came upon him.
- **GOOD FRUIT:** David demonstrated a peaceable restraint, even when taking lives would seem to have been justified, (both w/ Absalom and w/Shimel). He sought reconciliation with the rebels by elevating Absalom’s general Amasa over his own army.
- **GRACIOUS CYCLE:** God allowed David to continue his rule and to make provision for the Temple. And God would later reaffirm His opinion that David was a man after His own heart.

#### Purpose of The Three Tree Model

1. This model serves as a tool to help us discern our sin patterns.
  - Understanding the HEAT that comes from circumstances can help us to anticipate temptation and when it's coming and to be better prepared to face it.
  - Learning to taste the FRUIT of our actions, and give proper attention to our behaviors, is vitally important in our war against sin.
  - Considering the ROOT causes of our sinful responses is the key to meaningful change. It does no good to address bad fruit if we don't address the bad root. And, if the root can be made good, then good fruit will automatically follow. It's all about the motives of the heart!

#### Luke 13:6-9

*And He began telling this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it, and did not find any. And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?' And he answered and said to him, 'Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.'"*

2. This model helps us to think and define sin in biblical terms.
  - It's better to use biblical language to describe our sins rather than the morally neutral terms:
    - Pride, Selfishness, Rebellion, Unbelief, Bitterness

Hebrews 12:15

*See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled.*

(See attached list of Biblical Categories / Names of Sins)

- Acknowledge that motivational issues are lordship issues.
3. The model helps us take accountability for our own sin.
    - Taking accountability for our own sins allows us the prospect of change.

### **DYNAMICS OF BIBLICAL CHANGE**

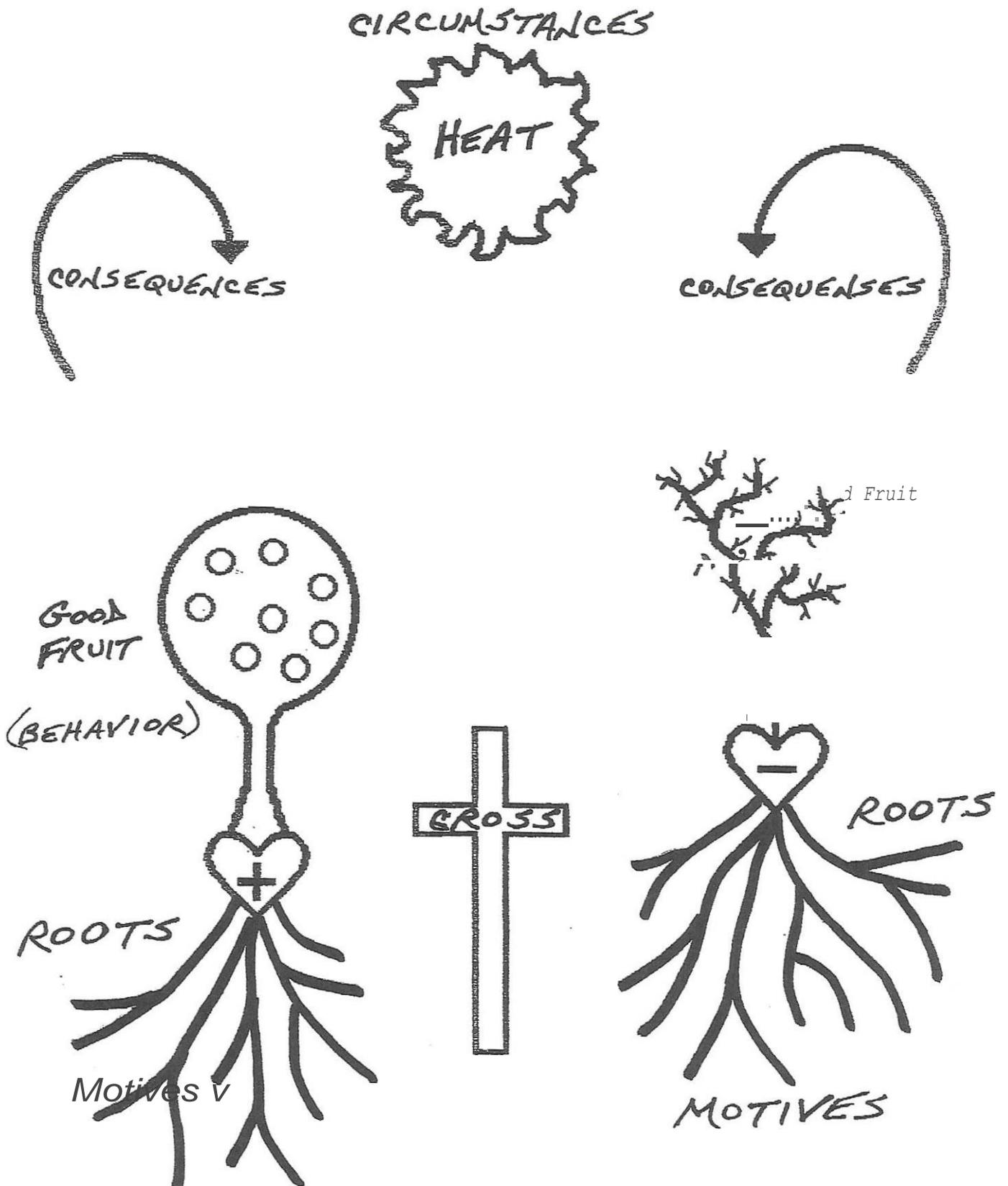
1. HEAT: What is your situation?
2. THORNS: How are you responding?
3. BAD ROOT: What do you expect, crave, demand or believe?
4. VICIOUS CIRCLE: What are the consequences of your reaction?
5. CROSS: What does God reveal with respect to you and your situation?
6. GOOD ROOT: What should rule you? Turn to God!
7. GOOD FRUIT: What should you do now? Do it!
8. GRACIOUS CIRCLE: What are the consequences of your godly response?

## **HOMEWORK:**

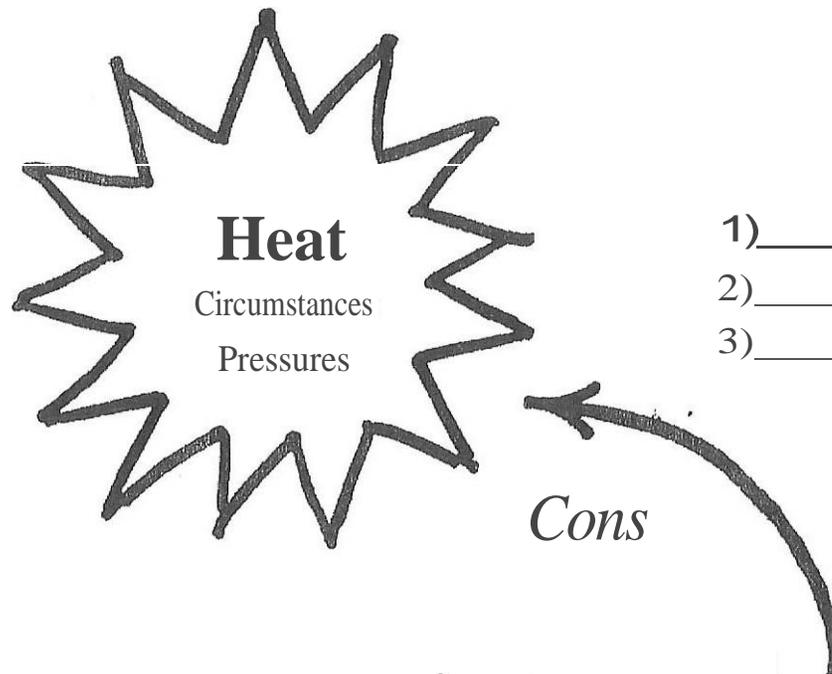
Continue to review any scripture verses you have memorized. (ie. Galatians 2:20, John 3:30 & Romans 12:1-2)

1. Continue to radically apply a portion of scripture to your daily life.
2. Continue to practice the discipline of thanking God when your personal "idols" get tweaked - so that you can identify them and repent.
3. Fill out a "practice" worksheet, (included in session notes), to help you diagnose the root causes of a specific sinful response you recently experienced. Take yourself through the steps of the Dynamics of Change. (You may keep it confidential or talk it through with others.)

# 3 Trees Model

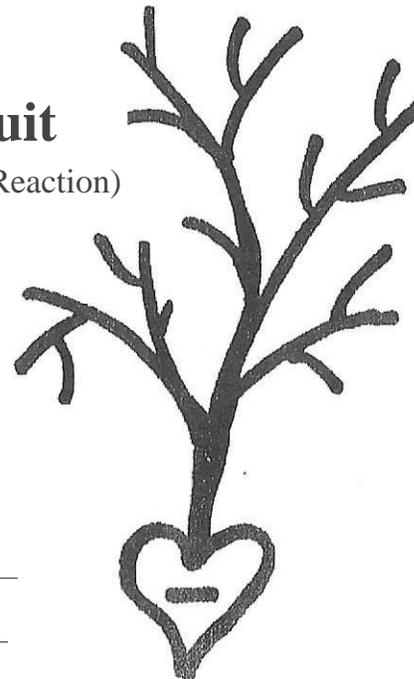


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- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_



- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
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**Fruit**  
(Behavior & Reaction)



- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_

**Roots** (Motives)

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_

# Biblical Categories/Names Of Sin

Anger	James 1:19	Laziness	Proverbs 20:4
Bitterness	Hebrews 12:15	Lust	1 Peter 2:11
Boasting	1 Corinthians 4:7	Lying	Ephesians 4:25
Careless Words	Matthew 12:36	Out-Of-Control	Proverbs 25:28
Cheating	Amos 8:5,7	Pornography	Psalms 101:3
Complacency	Revelation 3:15	Prayerlessness	Luke 18:1
Complaining	Philippians 2:14	Pride	Proverbs 16:5
Covetousness	Luke 12:15	Procrastination	Proverbs 10:5
Criticalness	Galatians 5:15	Profanity	Proverbs 4:24
Discontent	Hebrews 13:5	Rebellion	1 Samuel 15:23
Disobedience	1 Samuel 12:15	Selfishness	Philippians 2:21
Disrespect	1 Peter 2: 17-18	Slander	James 4:11
Favoritism	James 2:1	Slothfulness	Proverbs 18:9
Gluttony	Proverbs 23:21	Stealing	Ephesians 4:28
Gossip	Timothy 5:13	Stinginess	1 John 3:17
Greed	1 Timothy 6:9-10	Strife	Proverbs 29:22
Grumbling	Ephesians 4:29	Stubbornness	Nehemiah 9:29
Hatred	Matthew 5:21-22	Unbelief	Hebrews 3:12
Hypocrisy	Psalms 55:21	Unfaithfulness	Proverbs 25: 19
Immodesty	Proverbs 7:10	Unforgiving	Mark 11:26
Immorality	1 Corinthians 6:18	Ungratefulness	Romans 1:21
Impatience	James 1:2	Unloving	1 John 4:7
Irresponsibility	Luke 16:12	Worry	Matthew 6:25-32
Irritation	1 Corinthians 13:5		
Jealousy	Job 5:2		
Judgment	Matthew 7:1-2		