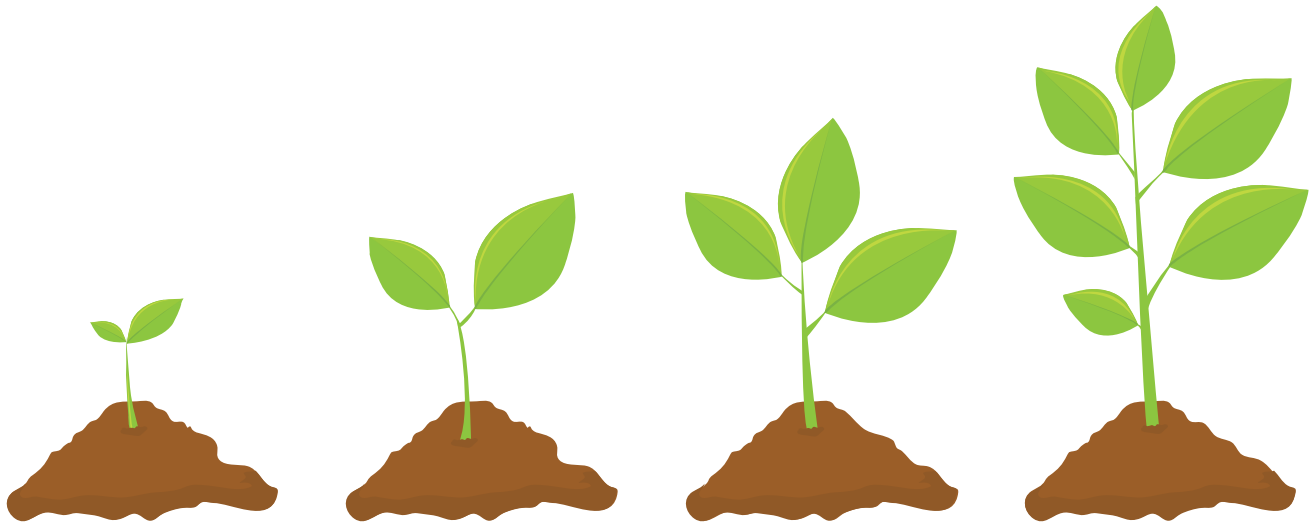


a study guide based on the **How People Change** book and study guide  
by Timothy S Lane and Paul David Tripp



# HOW PEOPLE CHANGE

HOW CHRIST CHANGES US BY HIS GRACE

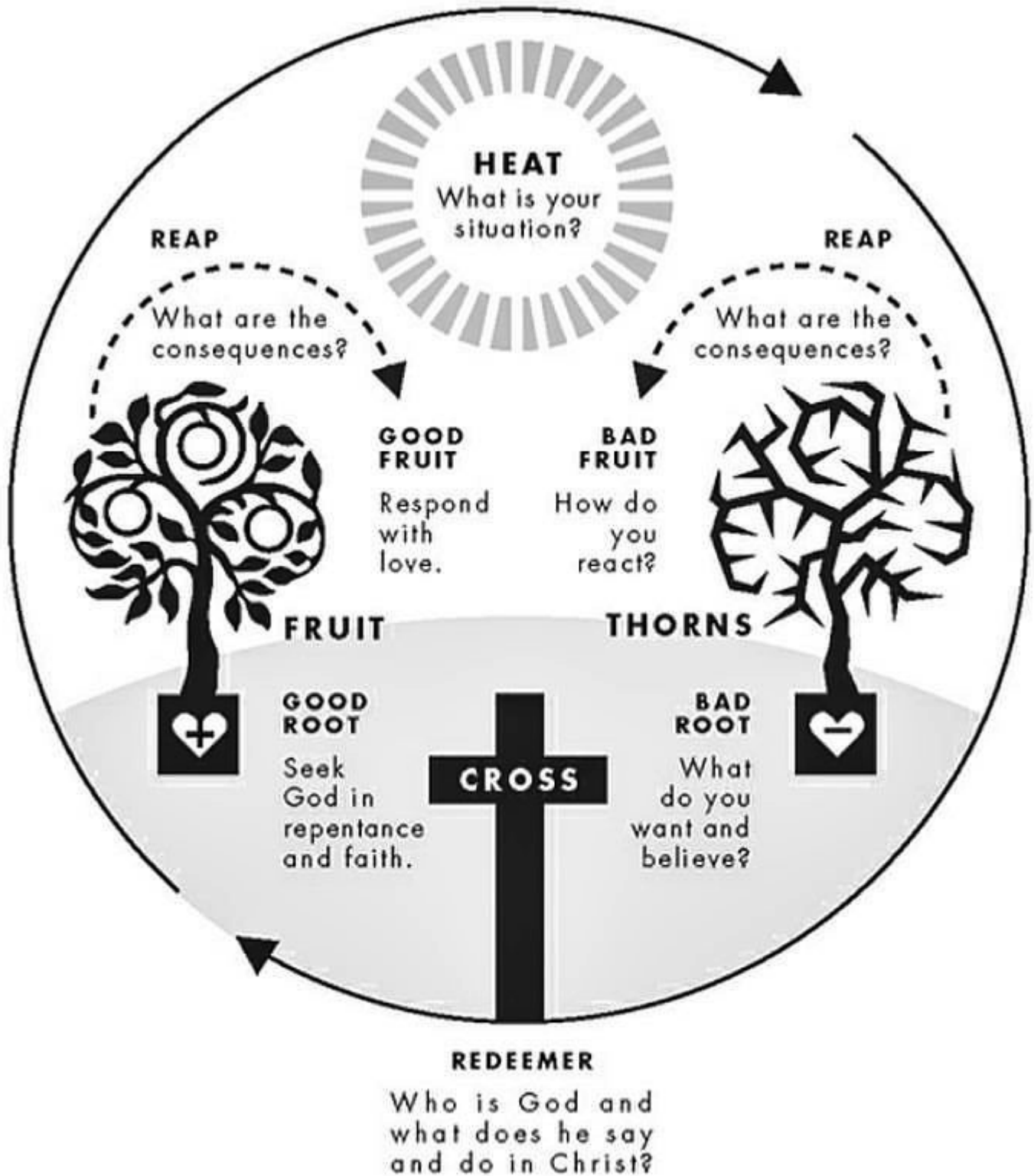
Lessons 1-4

a FOUNDATIONS FOR GROWTH class at



# THE BIG PICTURE

# THE MAJOR ELEMENTS OF CHANGE



## CENTRAL THEME:

Future hope determines how you live in the present.



### Philippians 1:3-11

What is the source of this confidence?

What is he joyful about?

As you look at the passage, what does Paul want them to understand about the impact of Christ's presence in their lives?

In verses 9-11, what kind of growth does Paul pray for in the Philippians?



**Paul knows something that God wants us to know. No matter what you face today, you can be encouraged that God's good work is continuing in your life. Every step you take, God is moving you forward as you submit your heart to him. This kind of confidence and growth will change the way we respond to life. It's what moves us toward our ultimate goal - the thing for which we were made - the praise and glory of God (v 11).**

How does this encourage you?  
Do you look at your life as Paul looked at the Philippians' lives and his own?  
Or do you see things differently?

Based on Philippians 1:3-11, what do you think God wants you to see?

As you consider your own life in light of Philippians 1, how is this moment a step toward the destination God has in mind for you?



### Revelation 7:9-17

#### A PICTURE OF OUR FINAL DESTINATION

As this multitude looks back on all that they experienced on earth, what is it that they celebrate? What in their lives has changed for the better?



**How different our lives here can be if we learn to live with this picture in view!**

## PRESENT PROMISES FOR THAT ETERNAL DESTINATION

What are you living for? What is your goal in life?

Think carefully: are your hopes, plans, goals, and promises worthy of your true calling as a child of God? Do they reflect God's purposes to renew and refine your heart and mind and to make you more like Jesus? Are they in line with your final destination? Do they draw you closer to the One who will bring you there?



**Christianity's change process does not revolve around a system of redemption, but around the Person who redeems. We focus on Christ our Redeemer - the Word of God made flesh - who gives the pattern and power for change.**

## LESSON 1

### CENTRAL POINT

1. Living with Christ and his body is the Christian's final, most fulfilling destination.
2. This destination adds hope to the way we see ourselves and others right now.
3. God promises to complete the transformation of our hearts into his likeness through Christ's indwelling presence and power.

### PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. I need to acknowledge the drives and hopes that direct the course of my life.
2. I need to connect my final destination with my feelings, choices, and actions.
3. I need to acknowledge where Christ is calling me to heart change, so that being like him is my final goal.

### RELATIONAL APPLICATION

1. I need to see others in terms of the hope of their final destination.
2. I need to see the power of Christ's promise to transform their lives here and now.
3. I need to look for opportunities to help them live with their final destination in view.

## MAKE IT REAL

- ☀ What dreams and expectations get you through the day and give you hope for your future?
- ☀ Do you ever feel hopeless? What produces that sense of despair? What were you hoping for and not getting?
- ☀ How do the things you hope and work for shape your responses to people and circumstances? When people threaten your hopes and goals, how do you react?
- ☀ Pick one place of opportunity or pressure, difficulty or blessing, where you need to view yourself as changed and carried by Christ. How will that perspective change your response to that situation?
- ☀ Using one of the Bible passages from this lesson, write out a prayer asking the Spirit to help you apply what you have learned to your life and relationships.

Want to re-watch the lesson or catch up?  
*Open your camera app and point it at this code.*



## CENTRAL POINT:

The hope of personal growth and change rests on my relationship with a person, Jesus Christ, who powerfully acts to change my heart and make it more and more like his.

## PASSAGES THAT DEFINE YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST



### **2 Corinthians 11:1-3 *Married to Christ***

Three implications of my union with Christ:

1. If I am spiritually married to Christ, then the core of my present life is not present personal happiness but spiritual purity.
2. My betrothal to Christ gives this passage a "now and then" structure.
3. For Paul, the Christian life is more than having devotions, giving money, and participating in ministry. It is intensely relational.



### **Colossians 1:15-23 *Christ the Bridegroom***

Because I am married to Christ, and this is what he is like, how should that shape the way I think about my life? Complete each of the following:

- Since he is God (v15), then \_\_\_\_\_
- Since he is the firstborn over all creation (v15), then \_\_\_\_\_
- Since he is the Creator of all things (v16), then \_\_\_\_\_
- Since all things were created for him (v16), then \_\_\_\_\_
- Since he is eternal ("before all things") (v17), then \_\_\_\_\_
- Since he is the Sustainer of all things (v17), then \_\_\_\_\_
- Since he is the head of the body (v18), then \_\_\_\_\_
- Since he is the beginning and the firstborn among the dead (v18), then \_\_\_\_\_
- Since he is supreme (v18), then \_\_\_\_\_
- Since he is the fullness of God (v19), then \_\_\_\_\_
- Since he is the reconciler of all things (v20, 22), then \_\_\_\_\_
- Since he is the peacemaker (v20), then \_\_\_\_\_



### **Colossians 1:21-23; 2:1-15 *The Blessing of Our Union With Christ***

In Colossians 1 and 2, Paul's description of Christ is set against a realistic description of who *we* are. Are at least three things are true of us apart from Christ:

1. **We are guilty of sin and alienated from God (1:21-23)**
2. **We are foolish and blind (2:1-5)**
3. **We are powerless and enslaved (2:9-15)**



## Colossians 1:21-23; 2:1-15 *The Blessing of Our Union With Christ*

What Christ brings to the relationship perfectly meets the deficits that we bring to the relationship as sinners.

1. **Jesus is our justifier (We are guilty and alienated)**
2. **Jesus is our wisdom (We are foolish and blind)**
3. **Jesus is our power (We are powerless and enslaved)**



**When it comes to your spiritual growth, the Lord is certainly at work. However, growth is not a passive process in which God does all the work and you let it happen. Instead, in addition to God's work, you must take an active role in your growth. To help facilitate growth, consider doing the homework detailed on page 5.**



## LESSON 2

### CENTRAL POINT

1. The hope of personal growth and change rests on my relationship with a person, Christ, who acts on my behalf.
2. The Christian life rests on accepting who I really am (past and present) and who Christ truly is.
3. The Bible calls us to approach life aware of who Christ is and what he has given us.

### PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. I must not let my relationships and circumstances overshadow the reality of my marriage to Christ.
2. I must remember who I really am (past and present) and actively embrace who Christ truly is.
3. I must continually ask myself, "Where do I fail to appreciate what I have been given in Christ?"

### RELATIONAL APPLICATION

1. I want people to understand that change results when they are lovingly faithful to their heavenly bridegroom, Christ.
2. Ministry to others is more than getting them to do things; it is encouraging them to actively appreciate their union with Christ.
3. I want to help people grasp what it means daily and practically to believe who Christ is and what he has given them.

## MAKE IT REAL

The core issue of 2 Corinthians 11:1-3 is **spiritual purity**.

- ☀ Where are you most tempted to commit spiritual adultery? What things function as false lovers? What things make you feel beautiful? Where do you see Christ replacements in your life right now? (e.g. career, recognition, success, approval comfort/ease, health, youth, trophy kids, pleasure, certain level of academic success, theological knowledge, and ministry success)
- ☀ What attracts you to these "lovers"? Be specific in identifying these false lovers and in confessing your unfaithfulness to Christ.
- ☀ Write a prayer, thanking God for his love for you in Christ. Rejoice in who he is, in his blessings, and in your relationship with him.
- ☀ Using one of the Bible passages from this lesson, write out a prayer asking the Spirit to help you apply what you have learned to your life and relationships.



**Want to re-watch the lesson or catch up?**  
**Open your camera app and point it at this code.**



**LESSON 2**  
**SO YOU'RE MARRIED**  
**TO CHRIST**

# HOMESWORK

Turn to the figure to the right and consider Paul's example in Philippians 3:4-7. Notice some of the things he listed as the assets and strengths he though he had. But when he met Christ, how did his evaluation of these things change? (*Read 3:7-9*) Why did they change? Was Paul happy or sad about it? Why?

PAUL: PHILIPPIANS 3:4-7

Assets	Liabilities
1. Circumcised on the 8th day 2. Of Israel 3. Tribe of Benjamin 4. Hebrew of Hebrews 5. A Pharisee 6. Zeal 7. As for legalistic righteousness, flawless.	



WHAT I BRING TO THE MARRIAGE

Assets	Liabilities
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	



Use Paul's example as a guide to do the same kind of assessment for yourself on the chart to the left. What strengths, gifts, and assets do you bring to your relationship with Christ? In what ways are they liabilities in your salvation and in the process of change that makes you more like Christ? How do you respond to that? Why do you think God wants you to understand this?

Finally, complete the chart by listing what Christ brings to your relationship with him. As you can see, there are no liabilities! Why do you think God wants you to understand this? How does this encourage you as a new creature in the process of becoming more like Christ?

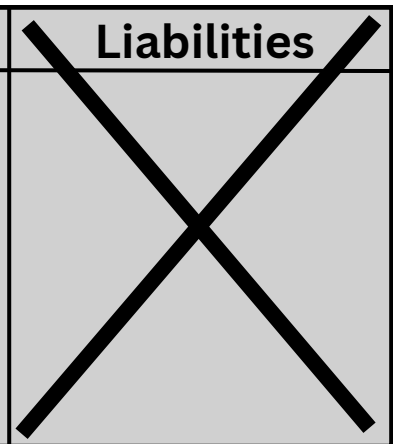
Everything that Christ provides changes our perspective on the things life brings our way. We no longer try to cope with life on our own, with our own resources. Knowing Christ and being found in him changes the way we experience everything! For example, how will the truth of bring married to Christ change the way you respond to:

- Loss of a job | Working a dead-end job | Your burden as a single parent | The death of a ministry dream | The injury, disease, or death of a loved one | Chronic illness | A difficult marriage | A friend's betrayal | Financial difficulty | Chronic loneliness | Career advancement | Financial blessing | A wonderful marriage | Obedient and well-mannered children | Perfect health*

**All of these. things take on new significance when we realize that we experience them within our relationship with Jesus Christ.**

WHAT CHRIST BRINGS

Assets	Liabilities
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	



## CENTRAL POINT:

God's work of personal transformation is intended to take place within the community of God's people.

### GOD HIMSELF LIVES IN COMMUNITY

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#### Ephesians 4:4-6

What unity do we share as believers?

### BELONGING TO GOD'S FAMILY

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#### Ephesians 2:14-22

In this passage, what is God seeking to produce in us, his people?

What has God done to make this possible?



**It is impossible to read this passage and come away with the idea that Christianity is a "just-me-and-God" religion.**

How does this vision of community impact you? Does it surprise you? Intimidate you? Annoy you? Encourage you? How much does your life currently allow you to develop relationships that are deep enough to help you grow and change? What are some of the obstacles to such relationships?

### BEING LOVED AS A FAMILY

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#### Ephesians 3:14-21

What is Paul praying for in this passage?

What language does Paul use that shows he believed these things would come from God through community?

### PURIFIED AS A FAMILY

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#### **READ: TITUS 2:11-14**

The ultimate goal of God's grace is to produce an active, healthy, unified body of believers. It's a full-fledged family freed from sin and its enslaving ways. It is this people, purified and zealous for good works, who are God's precious inheritance.





### READ: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12

What does this tell us about the unique and necessary role EVERY believer has in the church?



## LESSON 3

### CENTRAL POINT

1. A Christian is not only a child of God, but a member of the family of God.
2. Christians cannot grow to the fullness of God by living independently of others.
3. Personal transformation takes place in the context of redemptive community.

### PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. I continually need to learn more about God's love for me in Christ, and I cannot do this alone.
2. I need to understand my gifts and my role in the larger body of Christ.
3. God calls me to be committed to a lifestyle of mutually edifying relationships.

### RELATIONAL APPLICATION

1. I want to pray for others to gain a greater understanding of God's love for them in Christ.
2. I want to help others understand and own their vital place in the body of Christ.
3. I want to help others grasp the privilege and responsibility of participating in intimate Christian relationships that promote biblical growth and change.

## MAKE IT REAL

- ☀ How does your life reflect your commitment to meaningful relationships that help you grow and change? What things get in the way or serve as replacements for you? Here are some possibilities:
  - The busyness of life (keeping relationships distant and casual)
  - Being totally immersed in friendships that are activity and happiness based
  - Conscious avoidance of close relationships (too scary or messy)
  - Formal commitment to church meetings and activities but no real connections to people
  - One-way, ministry-driven relationships (always ministering to others but never allowing yourself to be ministered to)
  - Self-centered, self-absorbed, "meet-my-felt-needs" relationships that keep you always receiving but seldom giving
  - A private, "just-me-and-God" approach to the Christian life
  - Theology, as a replacement for community - knowing God as a life of study, rather than the pursuit of God and his people
- ☀ What opportunities for redemptive relationships are already in your life? Are you committed to and experiencing the personal transformation that God has planned for these relationships? If not, what things are in the way?
- ☀ If you do not have this kind of relationship in your life, what is God calling you to do so that you can participate in a redemptive community? Are there new relationships that need to be made? Present relationships that need to be strengthened or restructured? Relationships that need to be restored?
- ☀ Using one of the Bible passages from this lesson, write out a prayer asking the Spirit to help you apply what you have learned to your life and relationships.

Want to re-watch the lesson or catch up?  
*Open your camera app and point it at this code.*



# LESSON 4

# LIFE AS GOD SEES IT, CHANGE AS GOD DOES IT

## CENTRAL POINT:

*Practical hope, comfort, and direction result from looking at our lives and our world from God's big picture perspective.*

## CENTRAL QUESTION:

How does the "Big Picture" help you to understand and respond to the God of grace as he works through the details of your life?

## HEAT

**What is your situation?**

You and I are always reacting to things that are happening around us. Whether it is the scorching heat of difficulty or the unexpected rain of blessing, you are always responding to whatever is coming down on you. The Bible presents a shockingly real picture of a fallen world. It is honest about the things that happen here.

## THORNS

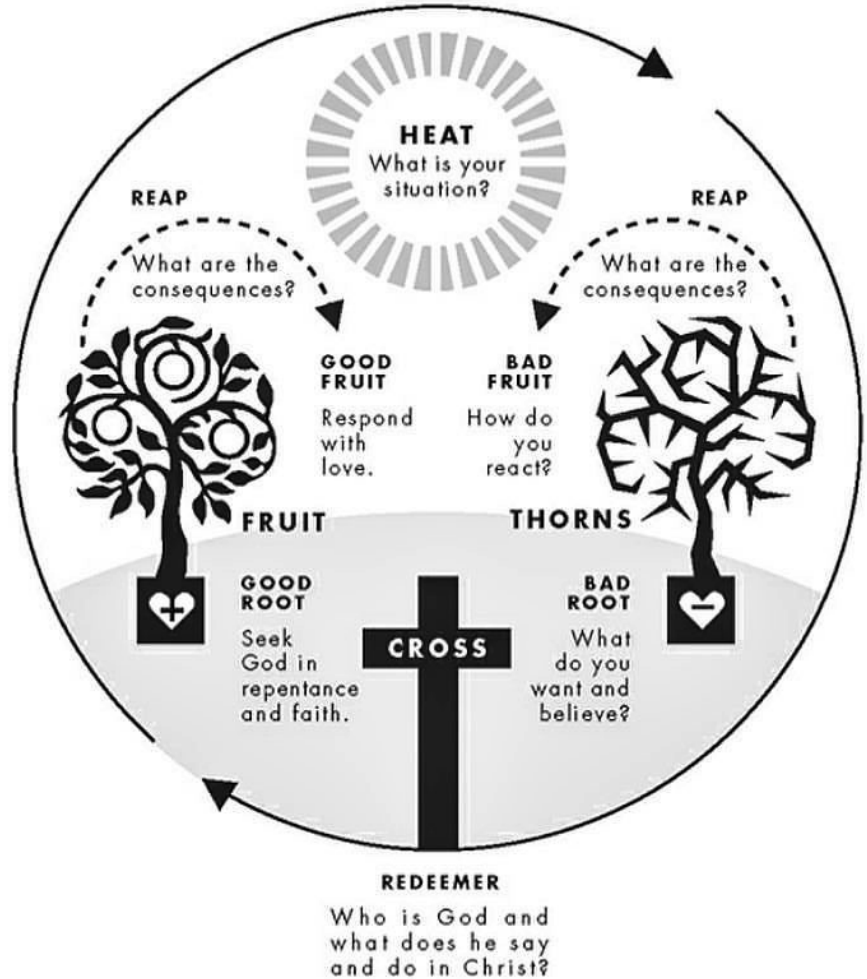
**How do you react?  
What do you want and believe?**

You and I are never really passive. We are always acting, reacting, and responding to the "heat" (or "rain") in our lives. Maybe it's a tough boss or a crazy extended family. Perhaps it is a rebellious child or a chronic sickness. Maybe it's a new career or a newly acquired inheritance. Whatever it is, the Bible helps us to see how we react to the "heat," in our hearts and out outward behavior. It reminds us that sinners tend to respond to the fallen world sinfully and each reaction yields a harvest of consequences. Scripture also makes it clear that these responses are not forced on us by the pressures of the situation. Rather, they flow out of the thoughts and motives of our hearts.

## CROSS

**Who is God?  
What does he say and do in Christ?**

The God of the Bible presents himself as "an ever-present help in trouble." The ultimate example is Christ, who came to a fallen world to live, die, and rise again. He gave us everything we need to respond in a godly way to what we face daily. The promise of the cross is not just renewed strength and enhanced wisdom in the face of daily trials and blessings. Christ, the Redeemer, gives us himself and in so doing remakes us from the inside out. Each of us is in the process of being remade to reflect the character of Jesus himself. His patience, love, mercy, courage, boldness, justice, and grace can be expressed more and more in and through us as we grow into his likeness.



## FRUIT

**Seek God in repentance and faith.  
Respond with love.**

Because of what Christ has done, we can respond to the same old pressures in a brand new way. Out of hearts renewed by him, we behave differently in response to the circumstances of life. These new responses produce a harvest of fruitful consequences in our lives and the lives of others.

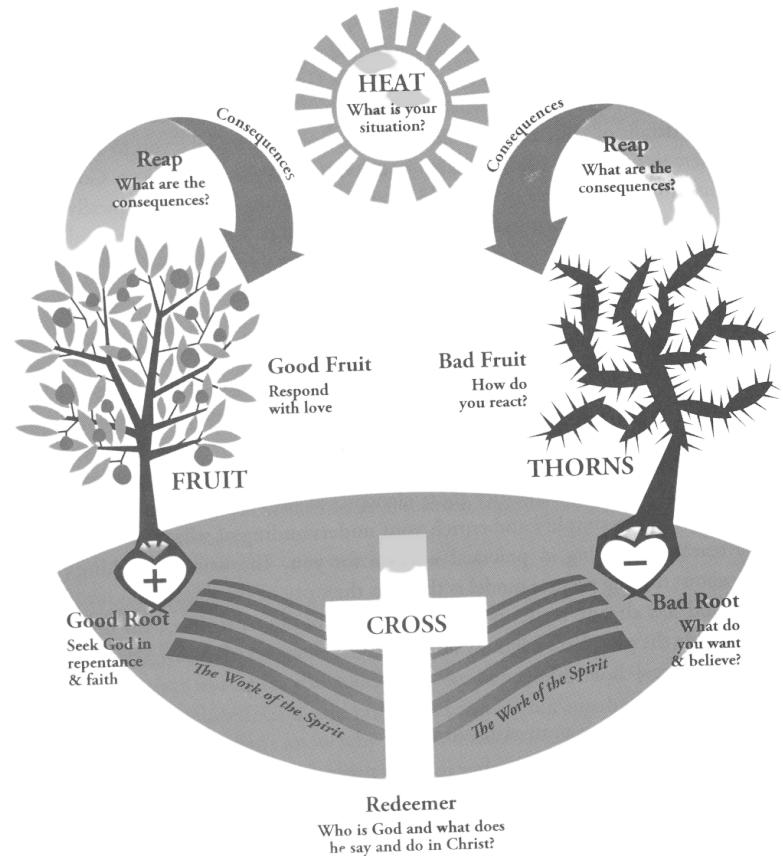
**Let's look at three passages where the elements of the Big Picture can be found.**

# LESSON 4

# LIFE AS GOD SEES IT, CHANGE AS GOD DOES IT

## JEREMIAH 17:5-10

The Bible typically uses concrete images to illustrate spiritual truths. Jeremiah 17:5-10 is a good example. Look at the main images in this passage. In verse 8, the image of **heat** is used to describe life in a fallen world. In verse 6 the image of a **thorn** bush in the wasteland represents the ungodly person who turns away from the Lord. In verses 5 and 7, there is a clear reference to the Lord. He is the Redeemer who comforts, cleanses, and empowers those who humbly trust in him. We represent this part of the passage by the **cross** to capture the redemptive activity of God on our behalf. In verses 7 and 8, the image of a **fruitful** tree emerges, representing the godly person who trusts in the Lord. In the midst of these images, verses 9 and 10 show us a God who does not simply focus on our behavior. Though he does not ignore behavior, his focus is on our hearts. He is the searcher of hearts because they are central in the change process he undertakes as our Redeemer.



This gives us a simple but helpful view of life that involves four basic elements described metaphorically. We have the **HEAT**. This is the person's situation - the real world with all of its difficulties, blessings, temptations, and enticements. We have **THORNS** (the bush) - the person's ungodly response to that situation. This includes behavior, the heart, that drives the behavior, and the consequences that follow.

We have the **CROSS** - that is, the presence of God in all his redemptive glory and love. He brings comfort, cleansing, and power to change. Finally, we have **FRUIT** - the person's new, godly response to that situation as a results of God's redemptive power at work in the heart. This includes behavior, the heart renewed by grace, and the consequences that follow. Thus we have a simple biblical picture that captures the major elements of change in the midst of life: **HEAT-THORNS-CROSS-FRUIT**.

Now, let's look together at two passages and organize them in light of these four elements. As we do this, we will begin to see how this big picture is basic to a biblical view and understanding of all of life. All of the elements are in each passage but presented in a different way. In 1 Corinthians 10:1-14 we see the elements presented in the general context of dealing with life's hardships. In 2 Corinthians 1:2-11, the same elements are present within the context of Paul's personal experience (a case study).

# LESSON 4

LIFE AS GOD SEES IT,  
CHANGE AS GOD DOES IT

READ: 1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-14

## HEAT v. 11-14

In verses 11-14, Paul is using the real-life experience of Israel in the wilderness to help the Corinthians understand their own situation. Look briefly at the overview of Numbers 11-14 below. Then answer the questions below.

What was Israel's situation? What pressures, temptations, blessings, challenges, and enticements did they face?

How did it compare to the Corinthians situation?

How does it compare to ours?

## THORNS v. 5-10

What are the ungodly ways Israel responded to the heat?

What are the *behavioral* responses (v 7b-9, 10a)?

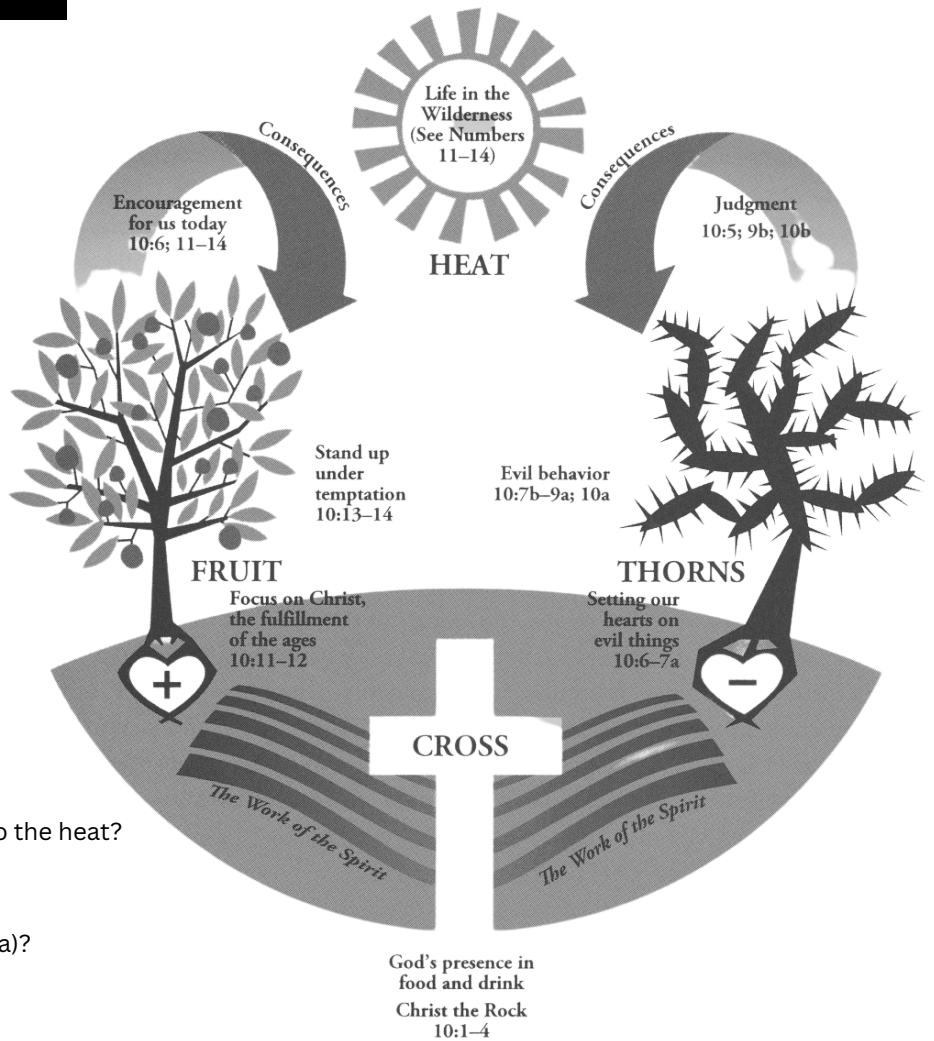
What are the *consequences* of their responses (v 5, 9b, 10b)?

What does that say about their *heart* from which their behavior grows (v 6-7a)?

## CROSS v. 1-4

How is God's presence and power shown to be with Israel in Numbers 11-14?

How is it shown to the Corinthians through the cross?



## FRUIT v. 11-14

In verses 11-14, Paul calls his readers to embrace Christ. Verse 11 is a reference to Jesus' first coming. Paul wants his readers to see how privileged they are to live in full view of the coming of the Messiah and to have full access to the blessings that are ours because of him. In verses 11-12, Paul speaks of a new **heart** that embraces Christ and engages in humble self-examination. In verses 13-14, Paul describes new *behavior* that includes new resolve to stand up under temptation and a new watchfulness that sees the tendency to slide toward idolatry. Paul is envisioning initial as well as long-term change!

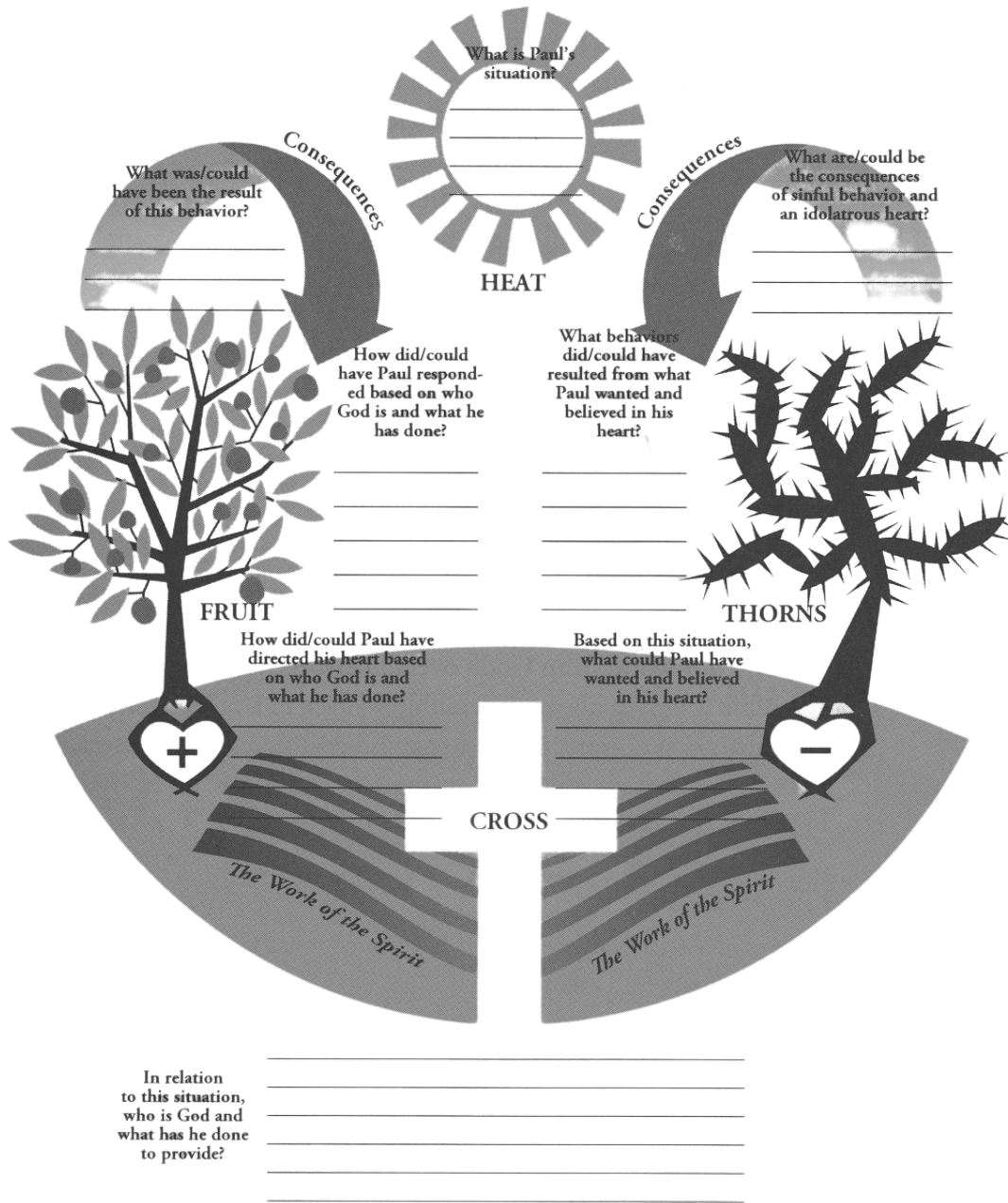
- **Numbers 11:1:** The Israelites complained about their hardships before the Lord. They blamed him for their plight.
- **Numbers 11:4-6:** The Israelites complained about the diet God provided for them.
- **Numbers 11:10-15:** Moses complained about the people God had given him to lead.
- **Numbers 12:1:** There is division at the leadership level. Miriam and Aaron complain against Moses because of his wife.
- **Numbers 13:26-29:** The people complain about the fight that will be necessary to claim the land God had promised them.
- **Numbers 14:1-14:** The entire community complains about their hardships and begins to desire a new leader. They blame Moses for their problems.

# LESSON 4

## LIFE AS GOD SEES IT, CHANGE AS GOD DOES IT

READ: 2 CORINTHIANS 1:2-12

This passage will help use to see how an individual actually uses the **HEAT-THORNS-CROSS-FRUIT** to reflect on their own life. In 2 Corinthians 1, Paul is looking at his own life in terms of this model.



Understanding the overall picture of life and change in a fallen world not only helps you understand the Bible better, it also helps you see how practically helpful the Bible can be in the process of change. In lessons 5-12, we will take a more detailed look at these four elements and their part in God's process of changing us to be more like him. This offers you a wonderful opportunity to grow in areas where you need to grow. It will also provide a foundation for you to help others.

In the lessons to come, we will look carefully at this four-part picture of how God changes us. We will also give you an opportunity to apply what you learn to your own life as you live under the "heat" every day.

# LESSON 4

LIFE AS GOD SEES IT,  
CHANGE AS GOD DOES IT



## LESSON 4

### CENTRAL POINT

1. Practical hope, comfort, and direction result from looking at our lives and our world from God's overall perspective on change.
2. The Bible is honest about the trouble we face in a fallen world.
3. Scripture's description of the change process that God oversees in our lives can be described using the categories of **HEAT - THORNS - CROSS - FRUIT**

### PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. I always need to evaluate myself in light of what God says about me, my world, and change.
2. The Bible's honesty about life in this world invites me to be honest about my difficulties and my responses to them.
3. I need to learn how to examine myself using the simple categories God provides in his Word (**HEAT-THORNS-CROSS-FRUIT**).

### RELATIONAL APPLICATION

1. I need to help people see the hope found in looking at life from God's perspective.
2. I need to encourage people with the way the Bible accurately and honestly describes what we face every day.
3. A significant aspect of a wise and helpful ministry is to help others see themselves from the perspective of these simple biblical categories: **HEAT-THORNS-CROSS-FRUIT**.



*As Christians, we are not either a fruit or a thorn tree; instead our lives will always contain some combination of fruit and thorns. As we turn to Christ in repentance and faith, the Spirit will enable us to grow more fruitful.*

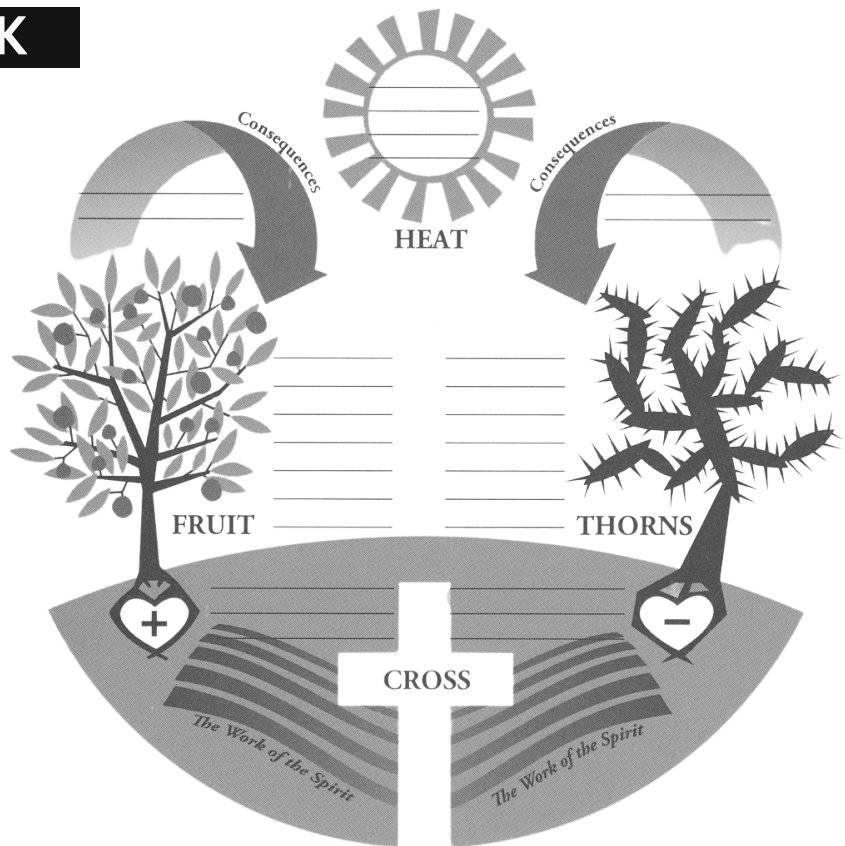
## MAKE IT REAL / HOMEWORK

- Identify a difficult situation or a big opportunity in your own life right now. Sort out the situation and your responses to it using the four elements of this model. Your struggle might be physical suffering or the kind of suffering we experience when someone sins against us. Or your struggle could be a personal struggle with a sin pattern. As you complete the following chart, think about what shapes the way you see the circumstance that you are in and how you are responding to your circumstances.

- Select one of the following passages to practice applying this model:

- Psalm 1
- Matthew 18:15-35
- Galatians 5-6
- James 3:13-4:12

*Possible answers can be found on pages 13-14*




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# LESSON 4

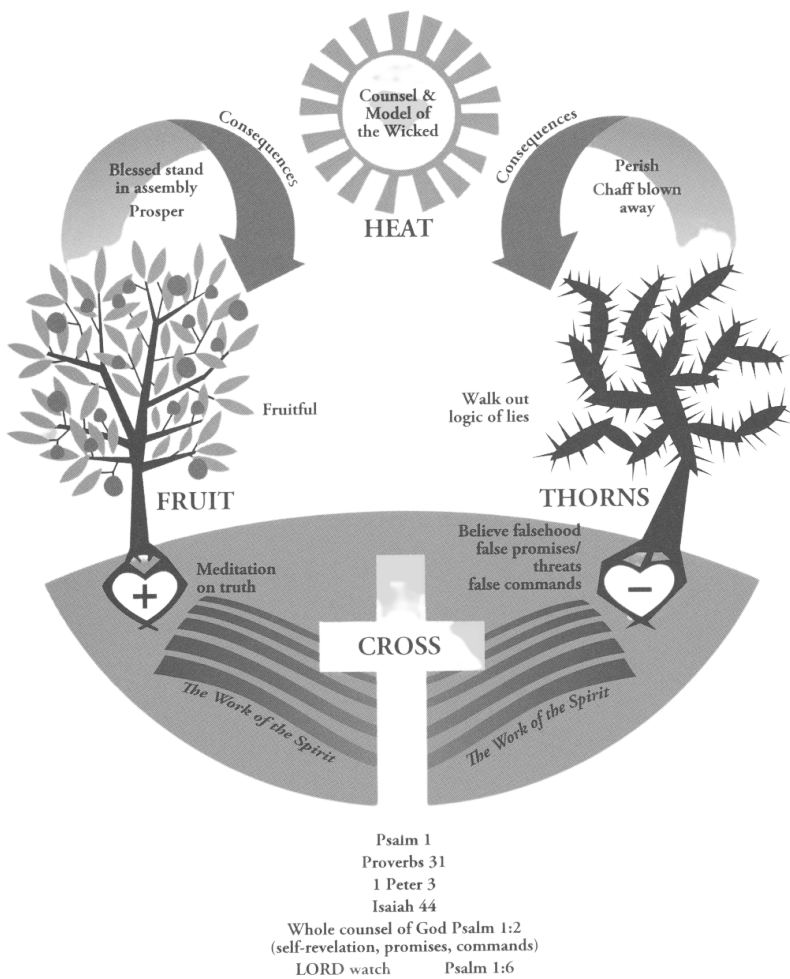
LIFE AS GOD SEES IT,  
CHANGE AS GOD DOES IT

## MAKE IT REAL / HOMEWORK

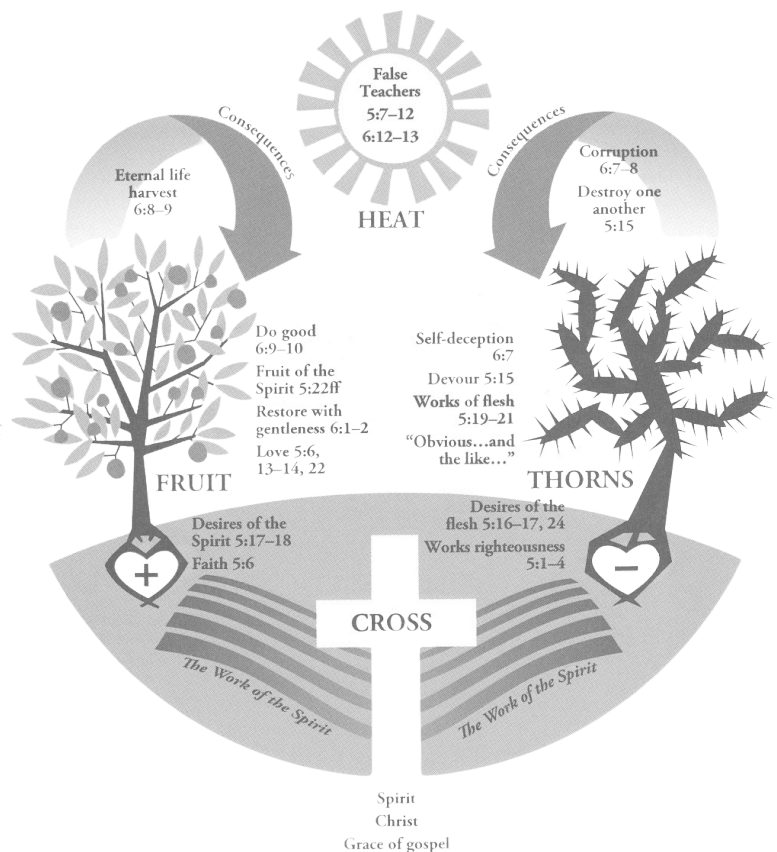
What aspects of the **HEAT-THORNS-CROSS-FRUIT** model do you tend to emphasize to the neglect of other ones?  
Some examples:

- Pharisees emphasized behavior over the heart.
- People who have suffered or been abused tend to emphasize the situation (**HEAT**) over everything else.
- The overly introspective person tends to spend his time in endless heart examination.
- The "Jesus-and-me" person tends to focus on the cross in isolation from everything else.
- The legalist tends to look only at consequences and conclude that bad consequences prove that there must have been bad behavior (see Job's counselors).

### The voices and images of misleading counsel influence us (Psalm 1, Romans 12:1-2)



### The works of the flesh vs. the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5-6)

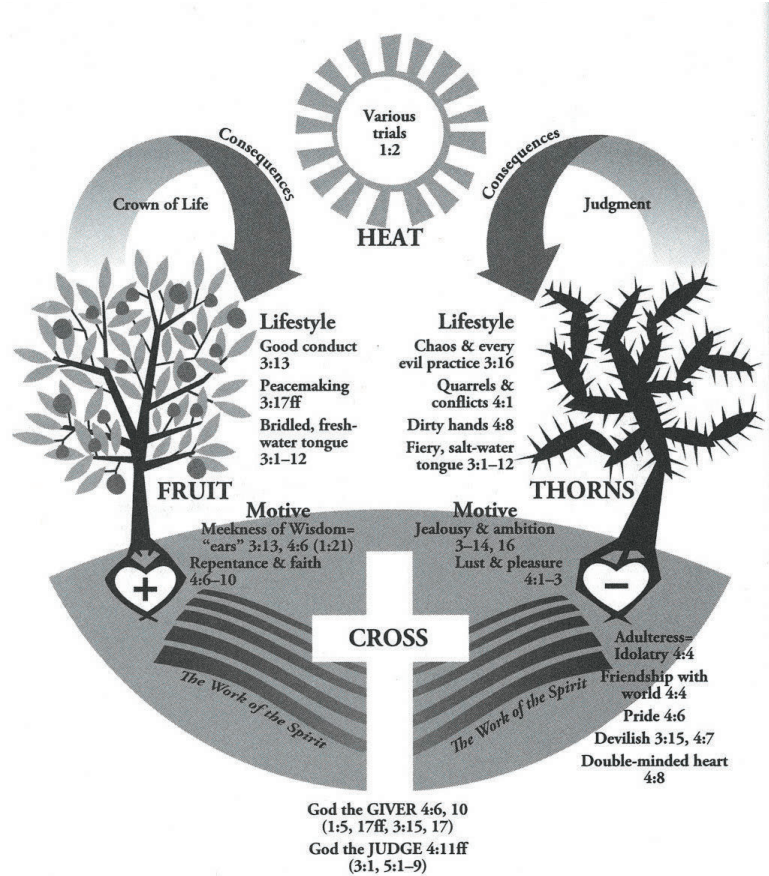
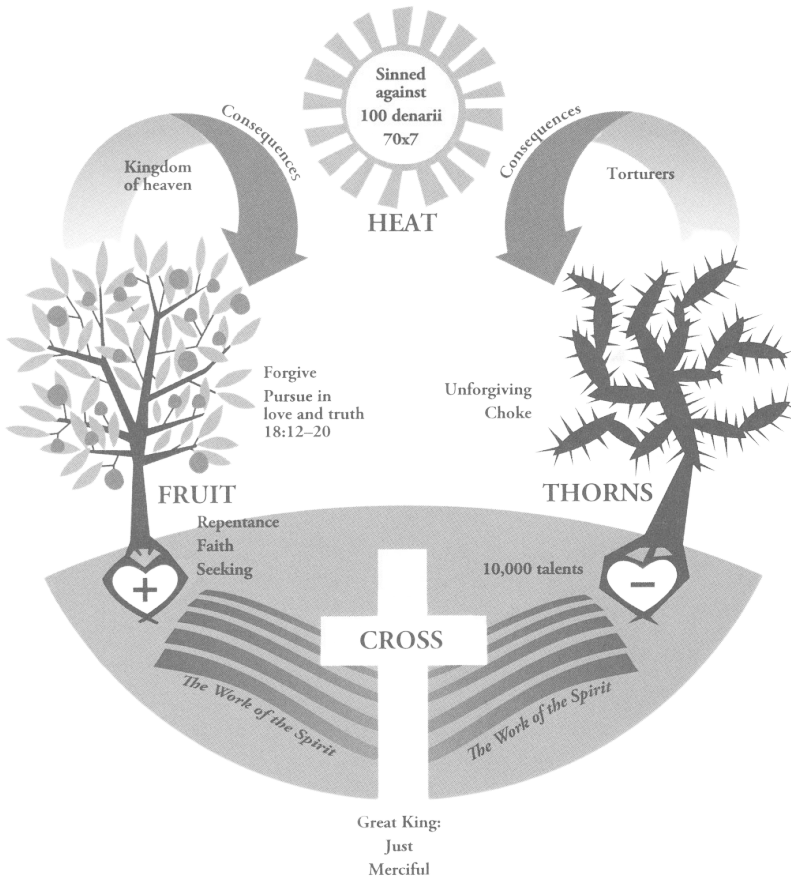


# LESSON 4

LIFE AS GOD SEES IT,  
CHANGE AS GOD DOES IT

## MAKE IT REAL / HOMEWORK

☀ Using one of the Bible passages from this lesson, write out a prayer asking the Spirit to help you apply what you have learned to your life and relationships.



People directly wrong us, tempting us to return evil for evil (Matthew 18:15-35).

What is biblical change? (James 3:13-4:12)



Want to re-watch the lesson or catch up?  
Open your camera app and point it at this code.

