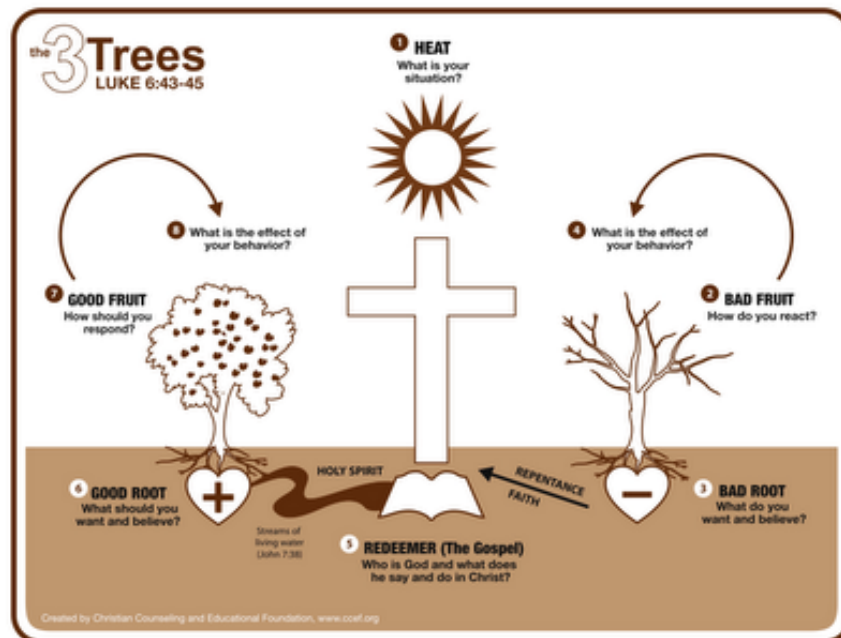


Self Counseling Project: Tree Diagram from How People Change

The self-counseling or prayer project is an opportunity to connect the gospel into real life. You will pick a situation where you've seen your sinfulness come out. To experience the gospel transforming us, we need to understand what we desire, so it is helpful to consider specific incidents and apply our theology to it. By breaking the situation down into manageable pieces, you'll get a better glimpse of your desires and how the gospel applies to real situations and desires. Mere analysis never changes you, so this is not an 8-step process to transformation, but it opens space and awareness for the Spirit to work in you, as you gain tools to pray intelligently, think accurately, act purposefully, and seek biblical help. The goal of this exercise is to help you see we are helpless to change but the gospel has the power to change hearts, desires and behaviors, so that we increasingly live by faith towards real obedience.



Directions: Think back on the past two months and pick a circumstance or incident that prompted a reaction or recurring emotion from you that you recognize as sinful—whether the response is internal or external. The situation need not be too trivial or too dramatic. Once you have a situation in mind, write down your responses to the following questions. Take time to carefully consider the answers and do not rush through them. Devote 10+ minutes for each question. Ask two people to pray for you as you do this. When you finish, pray your responses back to God. Ask him to work in you. Share this process with someone you trust.

1. **Heat:** What happens to you that brings pressure, temptation, trouble, beguilement? What is the significant context, situation, or relationship that pushes your buttons?

2. **Bad Fruit:** How are you reacting? What do you typically do? Thoughts, words, actions, emotions, choices, relationships?

3. **Bad Root:** What rules you, hijacks your heart, replaces God as the chief object of your affections and focus of attention? I want___? I fear___? I functionally believe___? I trust___? What are your 'buttons'?

4. **Consequences:** What are the ripple effects? How do your reactions affect relationships, work life, mood, finances, situation, health, etc.?

5. **Who is God** – relevant to *this* struggle? What does He promise? What does He do? His person, words, and actions intend to enter, address, and change how you see your situation, how you react, and the reasons for your reactions.

6. **Respond to God from the heart.** Stop. Listen. Ponder. Turn. Trust. Come. Seek. Ask. Talk. Transact with Him. How will you have a candid, intelligent, pointed conversation with God?

7. **Respond constructively into your situation.** Speak. Act. Do. Don't do. Choose. How will you show intelligent love for others (the opposite of every sin)?

8. **Consequences:** How do God (#5) and faith (#6) and love (#7) result in greater good?