

Lesson 2: Understanding the Heart of the Matter

Primary Objectives:

- 1. Review the foundation of “human need” and key questions everyone needs to ask.**
- 2. Correlate components of human behavior to a fruit tree and begin to answer the question, “Why do people do the things they do.”**
- 3. Clarify what the function of the heart is.**
- 4. Develop capacity to recognize the “chain of command” from controlling roots to producing fruits.**
- 5. Begin to Identify a strategy for “fruit producing” life change.**

1. Review the foundation of “human need” and key questions everyone needs to ask.

1.1. Based on your familiarity of following passages and recollection of last week's discussion, briefly note what they indicate that humans need?

A. Genesis 1:26–28, 2:15–18:

B. Genesis 3:1-7:

C. Hebrews 3:12-13, 10:24-25:

1.2. Consider the following “Key Questions” that were introduced last week.

Put a “*” next to the question you feel most competent to answer.

Put a “?” next to the one you feel the least confident in being able to address.

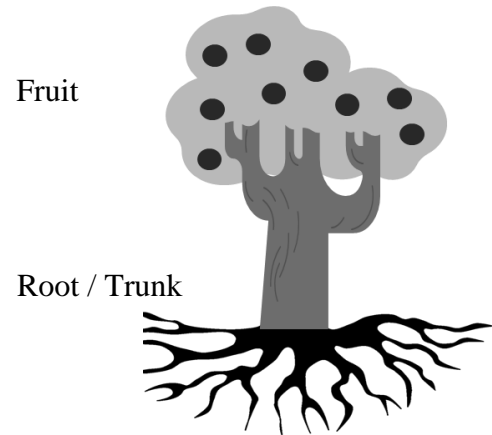
1. Why do people do the things they do?
2. How does lasting change take place in a person's life?
3. How can I be an instrument of change in the life of another person?

2. Correlate components of human behavior to a fruit tree and begin to answer the question, “Why do people do the things they do.”

2.1. Based upon the following passage in Luke 6:43-45, locate where each thing corresponds to the tree illustration.

Luke 6:43–45 (ESV): “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, ⁴⁴ for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵ The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

Heart
Spoken Words
Treasure
Good Conduct



What are some other examples of human behavior, good and bad, that we could add to the “fruit” section of this illustration?

2.2. Paraphrase in your own words the answer Jesus gives in verse 45 to the question, “Why do people do the things they do?”

3. Clarify what the function of the heart is.

3.1. What do these common sayings tell us people have in view when referring to a person’s heart:

- He loves me with all his heart.
- She recited the entire poem by heart.
- They played their hearts out.
- He wears his heart on his sleeve.
- She has a heart of gold.
- His heart’s desire was to ski the Swiss Alps.

3.2. People often make a distinction between the heart (what one feels) and the mind (what one thinks). How might that distinction be reframed based on the following passages:

- **Matthew 9:4:** But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts?”

- **Mark 11:23:** and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him.
- **Luke 3:15:** As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ,
- **Acts 5:4:** Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.”
- **Acts 16:14:** The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.
- **Romans 9:2:** that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.

Definition of the heart:

4. Develop capacity to recognize the “chain of command” from controlling roots to producing fruits

4.1. Identify some types of “bad behavior fruit” mentioned in James 4:1-2. What does James say is the cause that is at the root of this bad fruit?

James 4:1–2 (ESV): What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? 2 You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.

4.2. Number the following statements in logical order from controlling root to producing fruit.

- ___ Demand: “I must have...”
- ___ Desire: “I want...”
- ___ Disappointment: “You didn’t! ...”
- ___ Expectation: “You should...”
- ___ Need: “I will get...”
- ___ Punishment: “Because you didn’t, I will...”

4.3. Identify potential controlling root desires based on the observed fruit described.

- Mike honks and makes irritated gestures at the driver who pulled in front of him on the highway.
- Katie yells in exasperation, “Am I the only one that ever picks anything up around here!”
- Jack plops down on the couch after work and ignores the screaming kids.
- Shannon regularly stays up past midnight on Facebook to catch up on all that her FB friends are doing.

5. Begin to identify a strategy for “fruit producing” life change.

5.1. Read the following principles taken from the Study Guide workbook. Underline every instance of “heart” and circle every instance of “control.”

- Our hearts are always being ruled by someone or something.
- Whatever controls my heart will control my reactions and responses to the people and situations in my life.
- The deepest issues of the human struggle are not issues of pain and suffering. The deepest issue is the issue of worship, because what rules our hearts will control the way we respond to both suffering and blessing.
- The way God changes us is to recapture our hearts to serve him alone.

5.2. Given one strategy for change focused on the fruit and one strategy focused on the root, what are some potential benefits or drawbacks of one strategy over the other:

Fruit-focused change:

Root-focused change: