
_____ / _____: **What is your situation? What is your difficulty?**

- This represents a person's current situation in life with all of its difficulties, temptations and blessings. You and I always react to things that happen around us. Whether it is the scorching Heat of difficulty or the unexpected Rain of blessing, you always respond to whatever comes down on you.
- Heat can lead to significant growth at the heart level or it can lead to temptation and sin. In other words, Heat can produce fruit or thorns. It all depends on what is happening inside a person.
- *Text: James 1:2-4, 12-15*

_____ (the first tree): **What sin entangles you?**

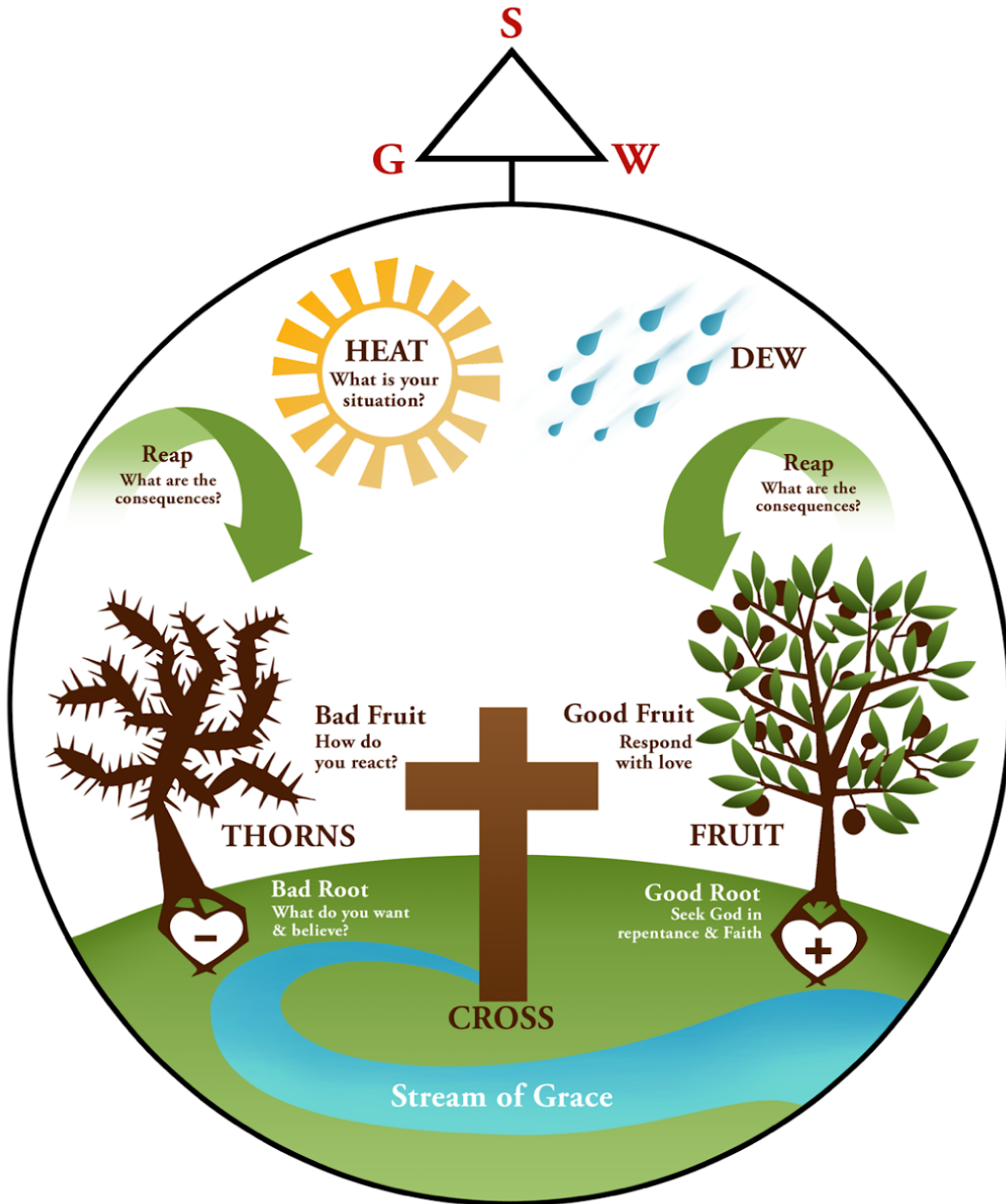
- The thorn bush represents a person's ungodly responses to difficulties, temptations and blessings. God does not just look at our behavior and our reactions to our trials, he searches our hearts' intentions, beliefs and desires. You and I are never passive. We always respond to the Heat (or Rain) in our lives.
- *Text: James 4:1-10 (cf. Prov. 4:23; Gal. 5:16-26; Matt. 12:33-35; 15:17-20)*

_____ (the second tree): **Christ brings new identity and new potential.**

- This is the source of living water. This captures the redemptive activity of God on our behalf. Through Christ, he brings comfort, cleansing and the power to change in the midst of life's challenges. Christ gives us Himself and in so doing remakes us from the inside out. If you are a believer, you are in the process of being remade to reflect the character of Jesus Himself. Your Lord is employing every circumstance and relationship in your life to accomplish that goal. Our hearts can respond to life in brand new ways because we are no longer dominated by sin, but we are liberated by the gracious rule of Christ.
- *Text: Ephesians 4:17-24 (cf. Ezekiel 11:19; 36:24-28; 2 Cor. 5:17)*

_____ (the third tree): **The result of real heart change.**

- This tree represents the person who trusts in the Lord, who learns to respond in a godly manner to his or her problems. God's redemptive power at work in a heart renewed by grace enables the person to respond in a godly manner to all circumstances.
- *Text: Rom. 8:1-13*



Redeemer

Who is God and what does he say and do in Christ?

*diagram adapted by Robert D. Jones from Paul David Tripp, Timothy Lane, How People Change.

Case Study

Andy became a Christian about five years ago. For the first three years, Andy woke up early every morning to pray and read his Bible for an hour. He faithfully sought out fellowship with other Christians and shared his new faith regularly. But for the past two years, Andy has struggled with guilt and feelings of failure. He has grown distant from his Christian friends and rarely talks to others about Christ. Andy has begun to struggle with overeating, spends much of his time on his phone or online shopping, and has slipped back into habits that dominated him before he became a Christian. Andy has tried to make efforts to read his Bible and pray, but it just doesn't seem the same. The Bible seems dull, and his mind wanders when he prays.

Table Discussion

Heat

What is Andy's situation? What are his difficulties?

Thorns

What kind of responses would you expect from someone in a situation like Andy's? What cravings may be ruling Andy's heart and producing these responses? What consequences follow these responses?

Cross

How would you help show Andy that Christ brings new identity and new potential to this situation? What would be a cross-centered response by a person in this situation?

Fruit

What fruit could we observe in Andy's life as a result of true heart change in this situation? What "good root" would produce this fruit? How would this fruit impact others in Andy's life?