

Equipped to Care - for Everyone

Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands – Lesson 1

The Best News: A Reason to Get Up in the Morning

This news has nothing to do with fantasies, dreams, or unrealistic expectations. It is rooted in historical facts and present realities. (2 Peter 1:16) It penetrates the harshest human situation with life-altering hope. It is the only thing really worth living for! It is the good news!¹

1. The BEST NEWS = I Corinthians 15:3-4
2. Penetrates the harshest human situations with life-altering hope = I Thess 4:13-18
3. Worth living for = 2 Corinthians 5:15

• **Life before the fall**

For a brief period of time when God created the world, perfect people walked through a perfect world in perfect union with God. The environment was lush and rich, with a menagerie of animals that inhabited the air, land, and sea. Every physical and spiritual need was fully met. There were no unfed stomachs or diseases to be feared. The gardens were free of weeds and thorns. Man and woman, Adam, and Eve, lived in perfect union with each other. There was no unhealthy competition, no power struggle, no vengeance, or recrimination. There were no secret plots or harsh words, no fear, guilt, shame, or rebellion against authority. There was understanding, communication, and love. There was no struggle with identity, anxiety, depression, or addiction. There was no painful personal history to overcome. There was no fear of what might happen next, no mixed motives, no struggle with inordinate desire. There was no temptation to sin. With God, too, there was a perfect union. People loved, worshiped, and obeyed as they were created to do. In the cool of the day, they actually walked with God in the Garden, enjoying perfect fellowship with their Maker. They were God's resident managers, placed there to govern what he had made, and they did their job well. God had no reason to confront them, and they had nothing to confess. All was right, day after day. Life was better than anything we can imagine from our sin-scarred vantage point.

• **Life after the fall**

But sadly, it didn't last long. In the most significant rebellious act ever committed, man and woman stepped outside of God's ordained plan. In a second it all came crashing down. All of the amazing beauty of that world was deeply and permanently scarred. In an instant, fear, guilt, and shame became standard human experiences. People who once lived in perfect harmony now accused, deceived, and fought for control. Weeds and disease became daily concerns. People began to desire what was evil and do what was wrong. Rather than submit to God's authority, they lived as their own gods. The world that once sang the song of perfection now groaned under the weight of the Fall. Sin altered every thought, desire, word, and deed. It created a world of double-mindedness and mixed motives, self-worship, and self-absorption. People desired to be served, but they hated serving. They craved control and nurtured delusions of self-sufficiency. They forgot their Creator but worshiped his creation. Rather than loving people and using things to express it, people loved things and used people to get them. Humanity's second generation even committed murder. They began to lie, cheat, hide, and deny. People suffered at the hands of others, from momentary thoughtlessness to unspeakable acts of physical and sexual abuse. For the first time, people wept from grief within and suffering without. God now saw his world ravaged by sin.²

• **Sin Produces Three characteristics.**

○ **Rebellion**

- The first thing sin produces is rebellion. This is more than breaking a few rules; it is a fundamental flaw in my character. It is not something I learn; I was born with it.
- Rebellion is the inborn tendency to give in to the lies of autonomy, self-sufficiency, and self-focus. It results in a habitual violation of God-given boundaries.
 - Autonomy says, "I have the right to do what I want when I want to do it."
 - Self-sufficiency says, "I have everything I need in myself, so I don't need to depend on or submit to anyone."
 - Self-focus says, "I am the center of my world. It is right to live for myself and to do only what brings me happiness."

¹Tripp, Paul David. Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change (p. 1). P&R Publishing. Kindle Edition.

²Ibid. pages 1-3.

- These are the lies of the Garden, the same lies Satan has whispered in generation after generation of willing ears. They deny our basic makeup as human beings. We were not created to be autonomous. We were designed to be in daily submission to God and to live for His glory. Living outside this design will never work.
 - We want control and hate being controlled. We want to make up the rules and change them whenever it suits us. Essentially, we want to be God, ruling our worlds according to our own will. No matter what else we are rebelling against, our rebellion is ultimately directed at God. We refuse to recognize His authority, robbing Him of His glory and usurping His right to rule.
- **Foolishness**
 - Foolishness believes that there is no perspective, insight, theory, or “truth” more reliable than our own. It buys into the lie that we know better. It causes us to distort reality and live in worlds of our own making.
 - Foolishness controls the man who is open to no one’s counsel and the person who sees little need to study God’s Word.
 - This foolishness distorts our sense of identity, destroys relationships, retards growth, and derails change. Foolishness convinces us that we are okay, and that our rebellious, irrational choices are right and best. Foolishness is a rejection of our basic nature as human beings.
 - We were never created to be our own source of wisdom. We were designed to be revelation receivers, dependent on the truths God would teach us, and applying those truths to our lives. We were created to base our interpretations, choices, and behavior on his wisdom. Living outside of this will never work.
 - **Inability to do right.**
 - Finally, sin renders us incapable of doing what God has ordained us to do. This inability colors every situation and relationship of our lives. It is not just that I don’t want to do God’s will, or that I think my way is better, it’s that even when I have the right intentions, I can’t pull it off.
 - I always fall short of God’s standard.
 - The apostle Paul powerfully captures this experience in Romans 7: “For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.”
 - It is not just that we are rebels and fools. Sin makes us moral quadriplegics. We are fundamentally unable to do what is right.

- **Replacing the KING with a thing. Romans 1:18-32**

Before the Lord God made man upon the earth, He first prepared for him by creating a world of useful and pleasant things for his sustenance and delight. In the Genesis account of the creation these are called simply "things." They were made for man's uses, but they were meant always to be external to the man and subservient to him. In the deep heart of the man was a shrine where none but God was worthy to come. Within him was God; without, a thousand gifts which God had showered upon him. But sin has introduced complications and has made those very gifts of God a potential source of ruin to the soul. Our woes began when God was forced out of His central shrine and "things" were allowed to enter. Within the human heart "things" have taken over. Men have now by nature no peace within their hearts, for God is crowned there no longer, but there in the moral dusk stubborn and aggressive usurpers fight among themselves for first place on the throne. This is not a mere metaphor, but an accurate analysis of our real spiritual trouble. There is within the human heart a tough fibrous root of fallen life whose nature is to possess, always to possess. It covets "things" with a deep and fierce passion. The pronouns "my" and "mine" look innocent enough in print, but their constant and universal use is significant. They express the real nature of the old Adamic man better than a thousand volumes of theology could do. They are verbal symptoms of our deep disease. The roots of our hearts have grown down into things, and we dare not pull up one rootlet lest we die. Things have become necessary to us, a development never originally intended. God's gifts now take the place of God, and the whole course of nature is upset by the monstrous substitution.³

³Tozer, A. W. (Aiden Wilson). The Pursuit of God (p. 11). Kindle Edition.

- **God's agenda for His Kingdom**
 - His glory
 - Isaiah 43:7 & I Cor 10:31
 - To know Christ and be like Him
 - John 17:3; Phil 3:8; Phil 1:21; Romans 8:28-29; 2 Cor 3:18

- **The Core issue and the Core solution**
 - The core problem issue is my sin.
 - Romans 6:11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.
 - Romans 7:24–25 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.
 - The core solution is Jesus Christ
 - The answer to our problem is a Person. John 14:6; Acts 4:12; I Tim 2:5; Col 1:13-29; John 1:29

- **The Ministry of the Word of God.**
 - The Private Ministry of the Word in my life
 - Psalm 1 & John 15:7
 - The Personal Ministry of the Word in other's lives.
 - Ephesians 4:15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ,
 - Romans 15:14 And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.
 - The Public Ministry of the Word

- **Love.** God's work of heart change begins with His love for us and us loving others with His love.
 - God's redemptive activity takes place within loving relationships.
 - With Christ first I Peter 3:15
 - With others next. Other believers are part of our sanctification.
 - God has a higher goal for our relationships than our personal happiness.
 - God wants our relationships to be the context for the change He works in and through us. (the one another passages)
 - We need to build relationships that encourage this work of heart change.
 - Scripture highlights four things when it calls us to love someone in a way that promotes God's work of heart change. Each aspect of Love promotes relationships where God's goals are central.
 - Enter their world.
 - An entry gate is a particular person's experience of the situation, problem, or relationship. To recognize an entry gate you do not ask, "What are the problems in this person's life?" Instead, you ask, "What is this person struggling with in the midst of the situation?" Or, "What has this person in its grip right now?" The entry gate is not what you think the person is struggling with; it is the struggle the person confesses.
 - My kid's rebellion. My fear. How are they experiencing the trouble?
 - Are they troubling their trouble? I did. Making things worse by how we respond to our trouble. I make my trouble/problems worse when I respond in sin to my troubles. That's troubling my trouble!
 - Train yourself to listen for four things that will show you where the person is struggling.
 - Listen for emotional words. ("I'm angry." "I'm afraid." "I can't stop crying.")
 - Listen for interpretive words. ("This shouldn't happen." "I guess I'm getting what I deserve." "I wonder if it's even worth getting up in the morning.")
 - Listen for self-talk. ("I am such a failure." "This always happens to me." "I don't have what it takes to face this.")

- Listen for God talk. (“I thought I was doing what God wanted.” “He simply doesn’t hear my prayers.” “How could God let this happen to me?”)
 - Remember, your focus should be on the person and what she is struggling with at that moment.
 - Identify with their suffering.
 - Climbing in the casket with them.
 - Hurting with them.
 - Listening to them.
 - Weeping with those who weep.
 - God does not want us to stay there though.
 - He wants us to give hope. And that it is normal to hurt but supernatural to hope and grow in Christ!
 - The Bible clearly declares that God is sovereign over all things—even suffering.
 - The Bible clearly says that God is good. It is faulty thinking to say that a truly good God would never allow a person to suffer, or that if God really loved you, He wouldn’t let x happen to you. The Bible declares that an infinitely good God is in the middle of our most painful experiences.
 - The Bible clearly says that God has a purpose for our suffering. The Bible doesn’t present suffering as a hindrance to our redemption, but as a tool God uses to work his redemptive purpose in us.
 - Bible explains the ultimate reasons why we suffer.
 - Romans 8:28-29
 - What is the good in Romans 8:28?
 - The answer is in Romans 8:29. God uses all things to make us more like His Son
 - James 1:2-4
 - Why can we consider it all joy?
 - God uses trials to make us perfect, complete, and lacking in nothing! Who does that sound like? Sounds like Jesus to me!
 - Incarnate the love of Christ.
 - The right clothes for the job of loving others. Colossians 3:12-17
 - We are called to have Scripture so deeply engrained in our lives that we are wise and thankful, and thus always ready to teach and admonish (confront) one another. Paul is calling us to a state of biblical readiness for the ministry opportunities He will bring as He changes us through the ministry of others.
 - As I incarnate the character of the Lord, I am calling people to trust and obey. In effect, Paul is saying, “If you are going to teach and admonish one another, you must first put on Christ.” God changes people not simply because you have spoken the truth to them, but because those words were said with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and love. When we do this, we become the physical evidence of the truths we present. We are not only incarnating truth, but Christ Himself.
 - God’s grace leads to change.⁴
 - Heart change.
 - Growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus 2 Peter 3:18
 - Growing in respect to salvation. I Peter 2:1-2
 - Enabling grace to live for Christ. Titus 2:11-14.

⁴Tripp, Paul David. Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change. P&R Publishing. Kindle Edition.

Discussion Questions - Chapter 1

1. Give several examples that speak to the scope of sin's impact on creation. p.2-3
2. How does knowing that God had a plan for redemption all along speak hope into your circumstances or someone you are trying to help?
3. The author gives us 2 primary agendas that God has for His kingdom. Describe them and share how this motivates us to help others change into Christlikeness? p. 4-6
4. What does the author say is our core issue? And what/who is the core solution? p.9-12
5. When people are struggling, they are tempted to turn from the Creator to the creation for answers. Tripp calls this inclination, "to replace the King with a thing." In what ways do you see this played out in the lives of people around you?
6. Sin produces 3 characteristics:
Rebellion

Foolishness

Inability to do right

Explain each one and how redemption in Christ can change a person. p. 13-16

Case Study:

You are meeting with Brad for lunch. He shares that his wife is driving him crazy, and he is working longer hours to avoid spending too much time with her.

Situation: What is going on?

Response: What does the person do in response to the situation?

Thoughts: What does the person think about what is going on?

Motives: What does the person want out of, or in the midst of, what is going on?

Equipped to Care – for Everyone!

Instruments in the Redeemer's Hand

Lesson 2 – In the Hands of the Redeemer

1. “An instrument is a tool that is actively used to change something, and God has called ALL of his people to be instruments of change in His redemptive hands.” Pg. 18
 - a. What are some ordinary tools in your toolbox that you use regularly?
 - b. Why do we need so many different kinds of tools?
2. “God uses *ordinary people* to do *extraordinary* things in the lives of others.” Pg. 18
 - a. Definition of ordinary – common, of no exceptional ability, degree or quality; average; not particularly good; not better than average (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 5th Edition)
 - b. Have you ever felt like Sam on page 17-18? You want to help someone by calling a pastor to come and help rather than be the one to provide help yourself?
 - c. Who were some ordinary men God used in the Bible?
3. “Scripture declares that personal transformation takes place as our hearts are changed by God’s grace and our minds are renewed by the Holy Spirit. We don’t change anyone; it is the work of the Redeemer. We are simply His instruments.” Pg. 18
 - a. “God has a huge toolbox, and His principal tools are His children.” Pg. 19
 - b. “God transforms people’s lives as people bring His Word to others.” Pg. 19
 - c. *Ephesians 4:11-16 “It was He [Christ] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastor and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”*
 - d. “In personal ministry, I want to bring **more than a heart of compassion, a willingness to listen, and a commitment to help bear someone’s burden.** Though these are the sweet fruit of Christian love I want to offer more. I want to bring **the heart changing truths of Scripture** to people in the midst of their situations and relationships. Personal ministry is about people loving people but in a way that includes **bringing them God’s Word.** This is the ‘truth in love’ model. The combination of powerful truth wrapped in self-sacrificing love is what God uses to transform people.” Pg. 21
4. God’s Word as a Monsoon
Just as the monsoon rains bring exotic leaves and flowers to dry parched land, “Personal ministry brings the monsoon of God’s Word to the parched terrain of the heart.” Pg. 23

Isaiah 55:10-13 As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is My word that goes out from My mouth: It will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. Instead of the thornbush the pine tree will grow, and instead of the briars the myrtle will grow. This will be for the Lord's renown, for an everlasting sign, which will not be destroyed."

God's Word changes people this dramatically!

5. What is the best way to minister biblically to another person?
 - a. Try not to use the Word of God as a "spiritual cut and paste system". This would be offering a command, a principle or a promise that seems to fit the need of the moment.
 - b. This kind of ministry rarely leads to lasting change because it doesn't get to the spiritual root of the problem.
 - c. God's Word is not an encyclopedia or topical catalog of human problems.
 - d. The Bible is a narrative, a story of redemption and its chief character is Jesus Christ. We need Christ to change us from the inside out. Lasting change begins when our identity, purpose and sense of direction are defined by God's story. p.28

6. God's Rebar – Three Grand Themes of the Story of Redemption
 - a. **God's Sovereignty** – God has a plan for his world and the people in it.
Read Daniel 4:34-35 (A great sermon on God's Sovereignty is available from Brad Bigney at www.graceky.org/sermons/08-we-delight-in-exalting-the-sovereignty-of-god/)
 - b. **God's Amazing Grace** – God has made a way to deal with my deepest problem – sin.
Gently and Lowly by Dane Ortlund p. 63-65 conversation
 - c. **God's Glory** – We were made for His glory, but sin makes us glory thieves.
 - Romans 11:36 "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things To Him be the glory forever! Amen"
 - "At the bottom of a broken marriage, a shattered family, or a forsaken friendship you will always find stolen glory. We crave glory that does not belong to us, and we step on one another to get it." Pg. 34

How does Proverbs 19:21 speak to the rebar? "*Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.*"

7. The central work of God's kingdom is change.
 - a. God accomplishes this work as the Holy Spirit empowers people to bring His Word to Others.
 - b. We bring MORE than solutions, strategies, principles, and commands. We bring the GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD, the story of the Redeemer.
 - c. Our goal is to help one another live with a "God's story" mentality.
 - d. Our mission is to teach, admonish, and encourage one another to rest in **His sovereignty**, rather than establishing our own; to rely on **His grace** rather than performing on our own; and to submit to **His glory** rather than seeking our own.

Chapter 2 - Discussion Questions

1. How does Tripp state that personal transformation takes place (p.18) and by what means does God accomplish this (p. 19)? What is the overall biblical model?
2. Explain the metaphor of the body of Christ and how God uses this to impact others. (p. 20-21)
3. Briefly describe the importance God's Word brings in the transformation process (p. 21-28)
4. What are the three grand themes of the redemption story and state why each one is impactful to you. (p. 29-35)

Know a Person Biblically

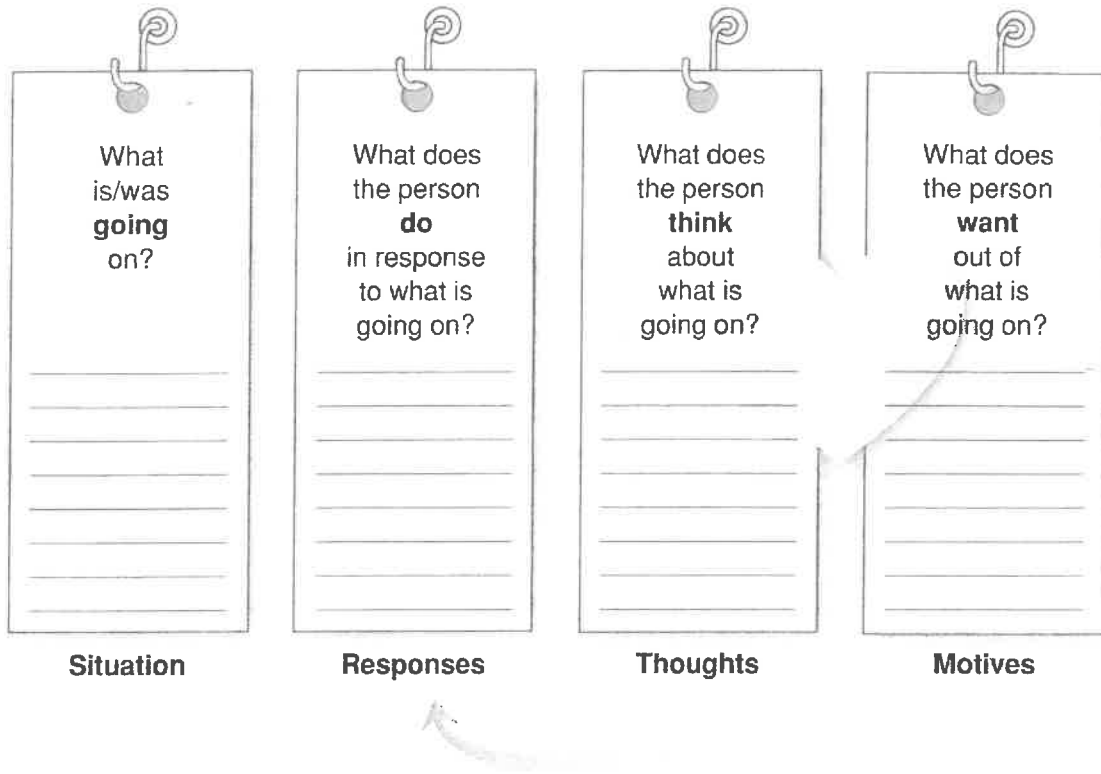
1. Christ is our model – *Hebrews 4:14-16* ¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let's hold firmly to our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things just as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Therefore let's approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace for help at the time of our need.

Christ entered our world to experience what we experience, so we can enter our friend/counselee's world to understand their experience or suffering.

2. Ask good questions and listen well. Define > Clarify > Explain
 - a. Always ask people to **define** their terms (What?)
 - b. Always ask people to **clarify** what they mean using concrete, real-life examples. If someone says, "We had a *huge* fight," ask them to describe what "huge" means. (How?)
 - c. Always ask people to **explain** why they responded as they did in the example they gave you. (Why?)
3. Ask open-ended questions. See examples on pages 175-176.
4. Make sense of the data biblically. Organize the data as on page 188.

FIG. 10.1

Knowing a Person Biblically.



Case Study:

You and Allison are meeting for coffee. She shares how she has lost her motivation for life and frequently feels discouraged.

Situation: What is going on?

Response: What does the person do in response to the situation?

Thoughts: What does the person think about what is going on?

Motives: What does the person want out of, or amid what is going on?

Equipped to Care – for Everyone!

Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands

Lesson 3 – DO WE REALLY NEED HELP?

1. Video

2. Concepts and Objectives

- a. Concept: To be human is to need help outside of myself.
- b. Personalized: I need truth from outside myself to make sense of life.
- c. Related to others: I need to learn how to be one of God's instruments of change in the lives of others.

3. A Biblical Foundation for Understanding People - We all need help!

- a. God has not given us a neat system of change that our own wisdom can figure out.
- b. Our hope for ourselves and for others can only be found in the presence and work of Jesus the Redeemer. Both the helper and the person in need depend on His wisdom and His power for change.
- c. Our culture views personal change as something that requires the help of a professional, but the Bible teaches that personal transformation takes place as our hearts are changed and our minds are renewed by the Holy Spirit.
- d. The two instruments that the Holy Spirit uses are the **Word of God** and the **people of God**.
- e. Read Isaiah 55:10-13 How does God use His Word in our lives?
- f. Read Ephesians 4:11-16. Who has God prepared for service and why?

4. Our Need as Seen in Creation

- a. Read Genesis 1:26-28. What direction did God give to Adam and Eve?
- b. Three things that separated Adam and Eve from the rest of Creation:
 1. They were created by God to be **revelation receivers**. We need to hear from God concerning who we are and what is our purpose.
 2. They were created by God to be **interpreters**. We are meaning makers. We are constantly looking to make meaning of our circumstances and life.
 3. They were created by God to be **worshippers**. We are always worshipping. Our hearts are actively worshipping something. What we worship will impact how we interpret.

5. Our Need as Seen in the Fall

- a. Read Genesis 3:1-7. We see the entrance of another voice with a different interpretation.
- b. We live in a world with much confusion where literally thousands of voices speak to us at the same time, each interpreting life and each competing for our hearts.
- c. We need Scripture to cut through confusion and make sense of life.

6. Our Need as Seen in Redemption

- a. Read Hebrews 3:12-13. What is the "pattern" of sin in our lives?

Sinful pattern>Unbelieving Heart>Turning Away> Hardened heart – not tender.

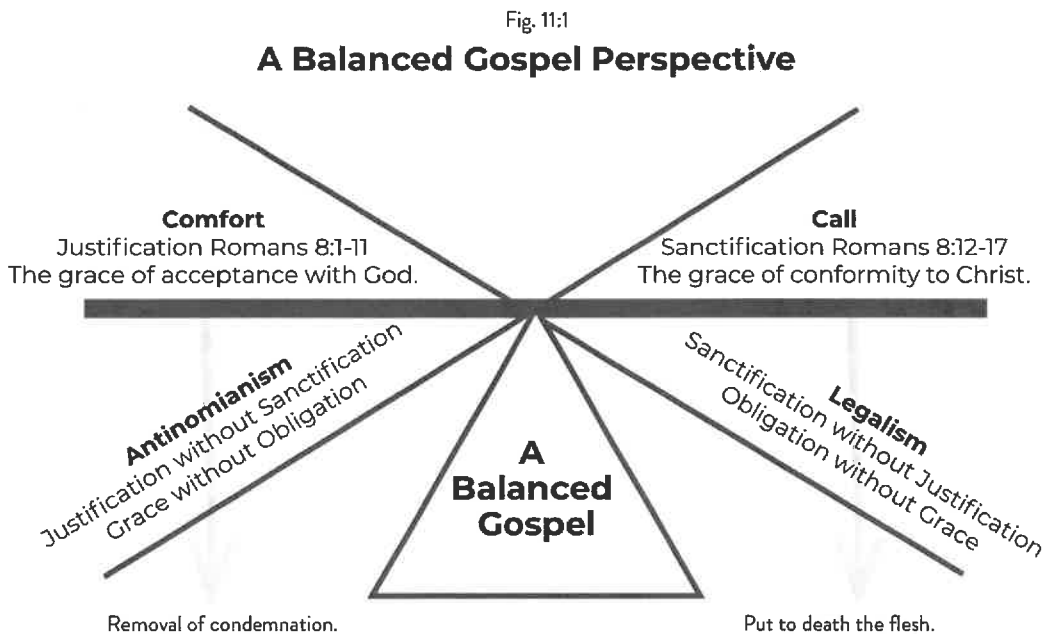
- b. How could a hardened heart ever happen to a believer? Why is this warning necessary?
We are prone to being deceived! We can spot the sin in others but are blind to our own sin.
- c. Each of us needs help from others, and each of us is called to help as God's instrument of change in the lives of others.

7. Three Questions that form the basis of a system of growth and transformation:

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

8. Personal Application

- a. I need to receive truth outside of myself to make sense of my life.
- b. I need to humbly examine why I do and say the things I do.
- c. I need to recognize sin's deceitfulness and commit myself to being approachable.
- d. I need to learn how to be one of God's instruments of change in the lives of others.
- e. I need to saturate myself with Scripture so that my interpretations and counsel to others are based on God's Word.
- f. I need to recognize how I am influencing others in the relationships and situations of daily life.



Discussion Questions – Chapter 3

1. On page 40, Tripp says that God created Adam and Eve Differently than everything else He created, and God “talked” with them. What did this demonstrate about how God created human beings? According to Tripp, why were humans given the ability to communicate?
2. What three reasons does Tripp give that make Adam and Eve different from the rest of creation?
3. Reflecting on the principles Tripp delineates on page 50, list two things that can help us fight the desire to be God and live life on our own.
4. Hebrews 3:12-13 gives us some insight into the danger of listening to the wrong counsel. What is the warning? How does this verse encourage you as you consider your calling to Biblical Soul Care?
5. Why is it important for all of us to reflect on Matthew 7:3-5 as we counsel others?
6. As Christians who still have pockets of spiritual blindness, what two character qualities do we need? (page 54)

Elements of Personal Ministry

Love, Know, **Speak** Do

But encourage one another day after day as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Hebrews 3:13

"Love for God is the only reliable foundation for a ministry of truth speaking. Any other motivation distorts the process. We cannot come in anger, frustration, or a spirit of vengeance. We come because we love God and speak on His behalf to someone who may need encouragement, comfort or be wandering away." (Page 200)

1. Read Leviticus 19:15-18 – this is the starting point for biblical confrontation.
 - a. Confrontation is rooted in submission to the First Great Commandment *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind."* Matthew 22:37
 - b. Confrontation is rooted in the Second Great Command *"Love your neighbor as yourself."* Matthew 22:39
2. Biblical confrontation means starting with your own heart
 - a. Matthew 7: 3-5 Deal with the log before removing the speck
 - b. Psalm 139:23-24 Search me, O God and know my heart...
3. Understand why people need to be confronted
 - a. Sin blinds our hearts
 - b. Wrong, unbiblical thinking directed by emotions
4. Speak with God's goals in view. Read Joel 1:12-13.
5. Remind them of their identity in Christ.
6. Remind them of God's heart for them. Read Joel 2:12-13.
7. Remind them of the truths in Romans 8:1-17, 26, 34. What a freeing Gospel!

Case Study:

Fred is struggling to find joy in his work and asks you to grab lunch. He feels like his job is going nowhere and he is discouraged and disappointed.

Situation: What is going on?

Response: What does the person do in response to the situation?

Thoughts: What does the person think about what is going on?

Motives: What does the person want out of, or in the midst of, what is going on?

Equipped to Care for Everyone
Lesson 4 - The Heart is the Target
The Heart, Worship, and Walking in the Flesh vs. Spirit

1. Where does our behavior come from?

- a. Worldly explanations
 - i. Past childhood mistreatments, trauma, parental neglect, dysfunctional family
 - ii. Present hardships, current circumstances, frequently mistreated
 - iii. Medical model – fatigue, genes, brain chemistry
 - iv. Tempted by Satan, he made me do it.
 - v. While these factors may contribute or influence our responses, our responses come from where we place our worship.
- b. Biblical Explanation - our behavior comes from the desires of our Heart.

2. Biblical definition of the Heart – nearly 700 passages on the Heart (additional notes see Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*)

- a. Common cultural association of Heart is emotions and sensitive part of us.
- b. Biblical definition is broader - the non-physical core of who you are inclusive of mind, emotions, will, desires, goals, hopes (soul, spirit, innermost being, mind are also used)
 - Ezekiel 36:26 – I will give you a new *heart* and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your *heart* of stone and give you a *heart* of flesh.
 - Proverbs 4:23 – NIV-Above all else, guard your *heart*, for everything you do flows from it. NASB – Watch over your *heart* with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.
 - Believe– Rom 10:9-10-with the *heart* one believes and is justified.
 - Think – Gen 6:5-thoughts of men's *hearts* were evil continually.
 - Choose – I Cor 7:36 – the heart chooses. The will is a function of the heart
 - Speech is an overflow of the Heart – Luke 6:43-45...out of abundance of the *heart*, his mouth speaks [aside-"each tree is known by its fruit" is a passage about identifying false teachers not identifying believers by their fruit]
 - Become convicted - 1 Samuel 24:5 – And afterward David's *heart* struck him, because he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe.
 - Remember – Deuteronomy 6:6 – And these words that I command you today shall be on your *heart*. (Psalm 119:11, Prov 4:21)
 - Discern- Ecclesiastes 10:2 – A wise man's *heart* inclines him to the right, but a fool's *heart* to the left.
 - Develop intentions/desires - Hebrews 4:12 – For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the *heart*. (Job 17:11)
 - Make plans—Proverbs 6:12 – A worthless person, a wicked man, goes about with crooked speech, winks with his eyes, signals with his feet, points with his finger, with perverted heart devises evil (Prov 16:9)
 - Experience peace – Prov 14:30, Prov 17:22
 - Make connections - Ephesians 1:18 – eyes of your *heart* enlightened.
 - Meditate / Ponder – Luke 2:19-Mary ponders in her *heart*. (Psalm 77:1)
 - Fear -1 Samuel 28:5 – When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his *heart* trembled greatly.

- Experience gladness – Psalm 16:9, Psalm 33:21
 - Grieve/Anguish/Sorrow– Psalm 38:8, Psalm 55:4, John 16:6
 - Love – Deuteronomy6:5 - Love the LORD your God with all your *heart*, soul, strength.
 - Become stubborn- Exodus 8:32 – Pharaoh hardened his *heart* this time also, and did not let the people go. (Psalm 81:12)
 - Lust – Matt 5:28 – anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has committed adultery with her in his *heart* (Numbers 15:39, Prov 6:25, Ezekiel 6:9)
 - Pride – Prov 18:12, Prov 21:4
 - Rejoice – 1 Sam 2:1, Psalm 13:5
 - Seek God or don't seek God -1 Kings 11:4 – As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his *heart* after other gods, and his *heart* was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the *heart* of David his father had been. (Psalm 27, Jeremiah 29:13)
 - Treasure things - Matt 6:21
 - Give – 2 Cor 9:7
 - Repent- 1 Kings 8:47, Acts 8:22
 - Experience peace - Phil 4:7, Col 3:15
 - Serve God-Deuteronomy11:13
- c. Sin comes from the Heart – Mark 7:20-23 –“What comes out of a man is what makes him unclean. For from within, out of men’s *hearts*, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly. All these evils come from inside and make man unclean.”

3. Behavioral change versus Heart change – root and fruit

- a. Take a rotten apple tree not producing fruit. I can fool my neighbors a little bit if I staple good apples on the tree. But, at the core it’s still rotten. Same is true for ourselves. When we go for behavioral change, it’s the equivalent of fruit stapling. The root/core of the person doesn’t change. We produce what is within our hearts. Our “good actions” can fake others out, but the heart is the target for change. Jesus spoke of this extensively regarding the Pharisees (whitewashed tombs).

4. Justification vs. Sanctification

- a. Identity truths – we aren’t a sinner anymore; we became a redeemed saint the moment of belief
- b. But our inner self is trapped in an earth suit of flesh.
- c. Result – our hearts are not fully sanctified – we need the work of the Holy Spirit, and the community of believers to make our hearts more like Christ’s heart.
- d. Heart of a Christian can be fleshly-driven or Spirit-driven in any moment (Worshipping the Lord is denying the fleshly desires and yielding to the Spirit)
- e. I can worship my way into problems, and I can worship my way out of problems.

5. **Gospel is beautiful – Justification - the initial power to change our eternal destiny by receiving the forgiveness of our sins and the righteousness of Christ.** Sanctification - the ongoing power of the gospel to change us into more Christlikeness. God is in the business of changing our hearts. Changing our sinful behavior requires uprooting the sinful beliefs/motives within our heart and replacing them with Godly ones.

6. Why do we need to “guard our hearts”? – Proverbs 4:23

- a. Heart can be led astray to pursue desires that are not Godly. Jeremiah 17:9
“The *heart* is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”
- b. Our Hearts are idol factories.
 - i. “Idol is anything or anyone that captures our hearts, minds, and affections more than God” (Brad Bigney, *Gospel Treason*)
 - ii. Fame, worldly success, money, pleasure
 - iii. Good things can also become idols.
 1. Kids that don’t fight.
 2. Safety - nothing bad to happen to me or my family.
 3. Kids that earn good grades.
 4. My husband to cherish me.
 5. My wife to respect me.

7. Battle for the Heart - James 4:1-10

- a. Myself and my kingdom vs. Christ and His kingdom (even believers move back and forth- Romans 7; James 4:3)
- b. James: desires and pleasures “battle” within us (1 Pet 2:11, Gal 5:16-26) – flesh vs. Spirit
 - i. Over desires Gal 5:17. My over desiring is set against the Spirit. Wanting something too intensely. Placing an inordinate amount of affection on something or someone.
CRAVING
- c. Coveting – wanting something we don’t have.
- d. Indulging personal pleasures – “selfish motives” (James 4:3)
- e. Desires can be good, God pleasing, but we desire that legitimate/good desire too much by putting that desire ahead of God.
- f. X-Ray Questions is a helpful tool in determining heart issues.

8. How do we know if a good desire is consuming us?

- a. You ruminate on it, thinking about it constantly and not trusting it to the Lord.
- b. You are willing to sin to get the desire. Or you manipulate others to get your desire.
- c. You sin when you don’t get what you want. God in his sovereignty withholds your heart’s desire (even a good one). How do you respond? Are you learning Godly contentment?

9. Homework Resources

- a. Journal your desires this week-be honest and include your emotions related to those desires. Identify fleshly ones and Holy Spirit driven ones (make two columns)
- b. Gospel Treason by Brad Bigney (book or sermon series)
(<https://www.graceky.org/sermons/series/gospel-treason/>)
- c. Bible references above (study/memorize; contrast the flesh and the Holy Spirit)
- d. Always emphasize the source of the power to change –not effort-based change, but Spirit-led change (Romans 7-8)¹
- e. Use X-Ray questions and ask them to pray through Psalm 139:23-24

¹Notes created by Hunger Mayo for Equipped to Care for Counselors 2024.

Discussion Questions

A (EVENT) → B (RESPONSE)
Child (spouse) speaks disrespectfully → Parent yells @ him/her to put them in their place

Lane (and we) would say what happens outside us *influences* us, but *in no way controls* our responses. Our responses are determined **not by the outside circumstances** but by our inside convictions: What does **my heart really believe?** What do **I really hold in value?**

A (EVENT) → B (WHAT DO I BELIEVE or VALUE?) → C (RESPONSE)
They speak disrespectfully → I will not be dishonored → I yell at them

The Kitchen Counter Clash

Mark comes home after a long, exhausting day at work. He walks into the kitchen and notices that the counters are piled high with dirty dishes, and his teenager left a messy trail of snacks everywhere. When Mark asks his teenager to clean it up, the teen rolls their eyes, sighs loudly, and mutters, "Why are you always nagging me? Do it yourself."

Instantly, Mark snaps. He slams his keys on the counter and yells, "You will not speak to me that way in this house! Get to your room!" Later, Mark tells a friend, "I only lost my temper because my kid completely disrespected me."

These questions are designed to help guide "Mark" away from blaming the circumstance and toward looking at his own heart.

1. Pinpointing the Real Trigger

Mark believes his teenager's disrespect caused his anger. Based on our illustration, how would you gently help Mark see that the dirty kitchen and the eye-roll didn't make him yell, but instead just revealed what was already in his heart?"

2. Uncovering the Core Value

When Mark demands, 'You will not speak to me that way,' what deep-down belief, right or desire is his heart holding onto or valuing most in that exact moment?"

3. Connecting to Scripture

The Bible tells us that our thoughts, attitudes, and choices flow from the heart. If you were counseling Mark, what kind of heart-level desires (like a craving for control, comfort, or personal honor) might be competing with his desire to honor God?

4. Guiding toward true heart change

If Mark just resolves to 'try harder not to yell' next time, why will that fail to bring lasting change? What would it look like for Mark to experience real repentance and change at his beliefs and values?

5. What Scripture could you share with Mark to help him evaluate his heart response, and how can that verse point him toward depending on God while parenting his son?

Elements of Personal Ministry

Love, Know, Speak, **Do**

Be holy for I am holy. Leviticus 11:44a

Change always demands a deeper understanding of the things of God and a more careful application of those truths to our lives. Since change is a lifelong process, it won't be over until we are in the presence of the Lord. So, as we encourage people to change, dealing with the needs of the moment is not our highest priority; rather, it is answering God's call to "Be holy, because I am holy: (Lev. 11:44). As we call people to do what God has called them to do, we must keep this ultimate destination in view.²

Have a Sanctification Agenda

- A. **Establish a personal ministry agenda.** This provides a sense of direction. Three agenda setting questions to ask are:
1. What does the Bible say about the information that has been gathered? Avoid bringing our biases or pride to this. Truly dig deep into God's word and don't assume an answer is immediately known. See pages 248-249 in Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands for an example.
 2. What are God's goals for change for this person in this situation? This specifically looks at God's call to "put on and put off" found in Colossians 3. Page 250 gives us an example.
 3. What are some biblical methods for accomplishing God's goals of change? See page 251 for an example.
- B. **Clarify responsibility.** Ask the question; Who is responsible for what? Generally, there are 3 ways of viewing responsibility. There are the irresponsible, overly responsible, and the genuinely confused. See page 250 for a helpful diagram as you clarify responsibility.
- C. **Instill identity in Christ.** In my life and as I've worked with others, this is often key in bringing about changed thinking. Consider Keith Ferrin's resource or others that the church offers to expand on these truths.
- D. **Provide Accountability.** As we discussed last week, we are called in Hebrews 3:13 to "Encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today" so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." Accountability provides loving structure, guidance, encouragement, and warning to someone who is fully committed to the change God is working in their life. The person who makes accountability work is always the person being held accountable. See pages 268-276 for further discussion.³

²Tripp, Paul David. Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands, People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change. (Page 239) P&R Publishing

³This page was developed by Julie LaRock 2025.

Equipped to Care for Everyone

Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands

Lesson 5 - UNDERSTANDING YOUR HEART STRUGGLE

VIDEO

SUMMARY

- 1. In every situation and relationship, there is a never-ending battle for the heart.** 960 references to the heart in the Bible make it a dominant theme in Scripture. The battle for the heart = spiritual warfare (Spirit vs. flesh). *"Who or What rules over my heart controls how I respond to life."*
- 2. What I worship will control me.** Recognize the battle in myself. What is my heart set on? Business success? A happy marriage? Good health? Physical achievement? Human acceptance? Wealth? Successful children? My reputation? Avoiding suffering of any kind?
- 3. James 4:1-10. Conflict is one of the principle effects of the Fall.** We tend to blame external circumstances, pressures, and people for the conflict in our lives. This passage makes it very clear that conflicts are NOT caused by such outward things, but *"are caused by your desires which battle within you. You want something but do not receive it..."* And the downward spiral begins. When angry, do I look outward for reasons or inward?
- 4. Notice that James does not call "desires" evil.** A desire is not always bad and does not always cause conflict. Desires begin to war inside me when I don't just WANT something; I HAVE to have it. Then a desire has become a **lust, a ruling thing** in my life. Two good questions to ask: "Am I willing to sins in order to get this?" and "Do I sin when I do not get it?" I must hold onto good and healthy desires with open hands: **Not my plan/my way/ my will, Lord, but Yours.**
- 5. War is always about control...about winning.** And so it is with spiritual warfare. I must open the window into my heart and ask God to show me Who's in control? **OPTION 1: The world, flesh and the enemy** or **OPTION 2: The Lord Jesus?**
- 6. Here are the steps that can occur when a desire becomes a demand,** revealing it as an idol in my heart, and it may spiral downward to the punishment stage. To destroy my life and affect the lives of others, I only need to go wherever my emotions lead me.
DESIRE (I want) ➡ **DEMAND** (I will get) ➡ **NEED** (It's essential) ➡ **EXPECTATION** (You should provide) ➡ **DISPPOINTMENT** (You didn't) ➡ **PUNISH** (Because you didn't, I will.....)

7. **GALATIANS 5:28 – GOOD NEWS!!!** “Those who are in Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passion and desires.” I have died to those. When Jesus died, I died with Him. When Christ rose, I rose. Because of my union with Him – my identity in Him – and the indwelling presence of His Spirit, when my flesh demands control of my heart, I have the power to say “NO” to my desires and can, by grace alone, rise up and go in a different direction. HALLELUJAH!!

ROMANS 6 spells it out: *“Sin shall no more master you.”* Galatians 2:20 adds: *“It is no longer I who live, but Christ Who lives in me.”* Also see **Colossians 3:1** and **Romans 8:4**

[The power of sin has been broken, but the presence of sin remains while we are in this world.]

THE BIG QUESTION (Per Paul David Tripp) is: AS I DEAL WITH MY DAILY SITUATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS, WHAT THINGS TEND TO CONTROL MY HEART???***

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: CHAPTER 5

1. According to James 4:1-10, our hearts are in a daily struggle. The desires of our heart are not necessarily evil, and may in fact be right and good. Why then can they become a problem?
2. Can you relate to Tripp’s story of wanting to cook a delicious meal for his family after a long day at work and finding himself frustrated and angry by the requests his family made on him? (page 81) When has God convicted you of a desire that was not sinful but that grew too large?
3. Do you agree or disagree with Tripp’s statement on page 82 “Human conflict is rooted in spiritual adultery.” Why or why not?
4. What does Tripp mean by stating “You can’t keep the second Great Commandment unless you are first keeping the first.” (page 88) How does Galatians 5:13-26 enhance your understanding of this statement?
5. What does Tripp’s story of the broken screen door (page 91) teach about how to apply Galatians 5:16? Can you share a personal story of how the indwelling Holy Spirit has worked in your life so you did not gratify the desires of the sinful nature?

CASE STUDY:

Greg confided in you that he and Danielle are having a repeated conflict over homeschooling/public schooling their children. They can't seem to resolve it themselves and he has asked you to go out to breakfast to help him with conflict resolution.

Situation: What is going on?

Response: What does the person do in response to the situation?

Thoughts: What does the person think about what is going on?

Motives: What does the person want out of, or in the midst of, what is going on?

Equipped to Care - for Everyone!
Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands
Lesson 6 - FOLLOWING THE WONDERFUL COUNSELOR

Intro

Video Prep:

Ch 1, 2, 3 - dealt with the basic struggle with sin.

Ch 4 - pinpoints the HEART as the problem.

Ch 5 - details ministering to the heart.

Ch 6 - Hands you your assignment.

2 Cor 5:16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. **17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! **18** All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: **19** that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. **20** We are therefore Christ's **ambassadors**, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. **21** God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Video:

YOU are an **AMBASSADOR!**

You were Chosen by the King.

You were Positioned by the King.

You were Equipped by the King.

To Present the Message of the King.

Use the Methods of the King.

Display the Character of the King!

An ambassador is not a job description - it is a 24/7 identity!

You must now ask, "How would Jesus view this situation?" "How would Jesus seek to make changes?" "What character traits would Jesus display in this scenario?"

Don't replace the real Trinity (Father, Son, Spirit) with a false trinity (Wants, Feelings, Needs)

There are FOUR ways of functioning in the life of someone else in order to be one of God's Instruments of Change.

See chart called Love Know Speak Do.

Love (5-6)

Building relationships in which the work of God can thrive.

5

1. Entry Gate - Casual to deeper relationship
2. Incarnate Love of Christ
Example: living evidence
3. Identify with suffering
4. Accept with agenda (Titus 2:11ff)

6 Offer grace with goal of change.

Know (7-8)

Getting to know people and learning where change is needed.

7

Asking good questions
Heb. 4:14-16
Data Gatherer

8 Make Biblical sense of data
SRTM

Speak (9-10)

Bringing truth to where change is needed.

9

1. Having right goals
2. Root confrontation in the gospel.
(Foundation)
3. Progressive Steps of Confrontation

10

1. Consideration
2. Confession
3. Commitment
4. Change

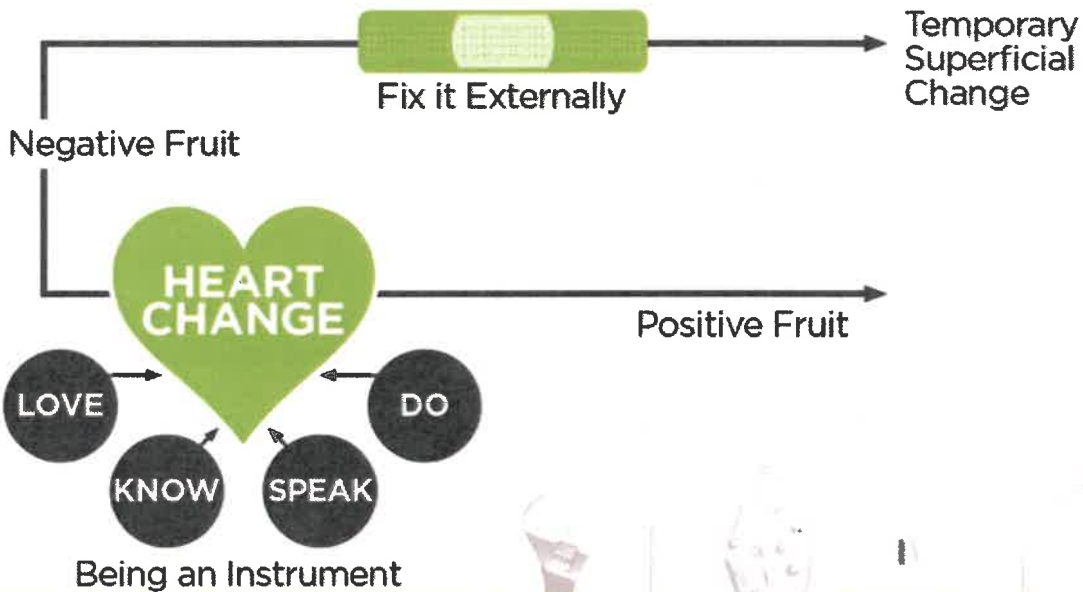
Do (11-12)

Applying change to everyday life.

11

1. Establishing your ministry agenda—know where you are going
2. Clarify person's responsibility
3. Instill in person their identity in Christ
4. Provide accountability

12



Discussion Questions - Chapter 6

1. Explain in your own words Tripp's statement "To understand your calling you need to understand the incarnation."
2. Prayerfully consider 2 Corinthians 5:14-6:2 and then state your personal calling in one sentence.
3. Think back to the last family conflict you experienced. How could focusing on the three points for an ambassador on page 107 have changed the outcome?
4. Tripp presents a diagram of ministry to produce heart change. It lists the four elements Love, Know, Speak and Do. He says they are not a four-step process but to be done simultaneously. Which of these comes easily to you? Which is more difficult for you and will require you to seek the Holy Spirit's counsel?

Case Study:

During community group, Bill and Susan share with the group, but during their story, Bill harshly makes fun of Susan in front of the group.

Situation: What is going on?

Response: What does the person do in response to the situation?

Thoughts: What does the person think about what is going on?

Motives: What does the person want out of, or in the midst of, what is going on?