

Study Guide - 16 February, 2020

Series: Redeeming Relationship

Text: Jeremiah 17:1-13/John 4



This guide will help you facilitate a clear understanding of the Bible passage with a focus on applying God's truth to our lives together. You should spend at least half your time discussing questions that are application focused. Look at the Big Idea and What your CG Must Take Away sections at the beginning of the guide to keep the discussion focused.

Introduction and Series Overview

The aim of the Redeeming Relationship series is to help us understand the various roles we play relationally, and how each of these is to be done under God empowered by the gospel. This gives us a proper framework for both redeeming broken relationships and relating to others, and how to generally relate to church members in a way that builds them up. It also helps us understand our own hearts and each other in relationships so that we can be compassionate and clear with them, as well as specific relationships that people find themselves in family, marriage, kids, work, etc.

Big idea

Our hearts are wicked because they trust in many things that are not God. In order to have our relationships with other people redeemed, we must first have our relationship with God restored, and worship him, first.

What your CG must take away from this study

For your group to see how what they worship affects their relationships, and to trust in the Lord and worship him with our whole heart.

Icebreaker

Think about a significant relationship in your life that you find difficult. What are some of the reasons we give for the difficulties in this relationship?

Read Jeremiah 17:1-13

¹ *"The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; with a point of diamond it is engraved on the tablet of their heart, and on the horns of their altars, ² while their children remember their altars and their Asherim, beside every green tree and on the high hills, ³ on the mountains in the open country. Your wealth and all your treasures I will give for spoil as the price of your high places for sin throughout all your territory. ⁴ You shall loosen your hand from your heritage that I gave to you, and I will make you serve your enemies in a land that you do not know, for in my anger a fire is kindled that shall burn forever."*

⁵ Thus says the Lord:

*“Cursed is the man who trusts in man
and makes flesh his strength,
whose heart turns away from the Lord.*

⁶ *He is like a shrub in the desert,
and shall not see any good come.
He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness,
in an uninhabited salt land.*

⁷ *“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord,
whose trust is the Lord.*

⁸ *He is like a tree planted by water,
that sends out its roots by the stream,
and does not fear when heat comes,
for its leaves remain green,
and is not anxious in the year of drought,
for it does not cease to bear fruit.”*

⁹ *The heart is deceitful above all things,
and desperately sick;
who can understand it?*

¹⁰ *“I the Lord search the heart
and test the mind,
to give every man according to his ways,
according to the fruit of his deeds.”*

¹¹ *Like the partridge that gathers a brood that she did not hatch,
so is he who gets riches but not by justice;
in the midst of his days they will leave him,
and at his end he will be a fool.*

¹² *A glorious throne set on high from the beginning
is the place of our sanctuary.*

¹³ *O Lord, the hope of Israel,
all who forsake you shall be put to shame;
those who turn away from you shall be written in the earth,
for they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living water.*

Q1. Why did Jeremiah prophesy against Israel in this context?

Q2a. How does Jeremiah describe the cursed man?

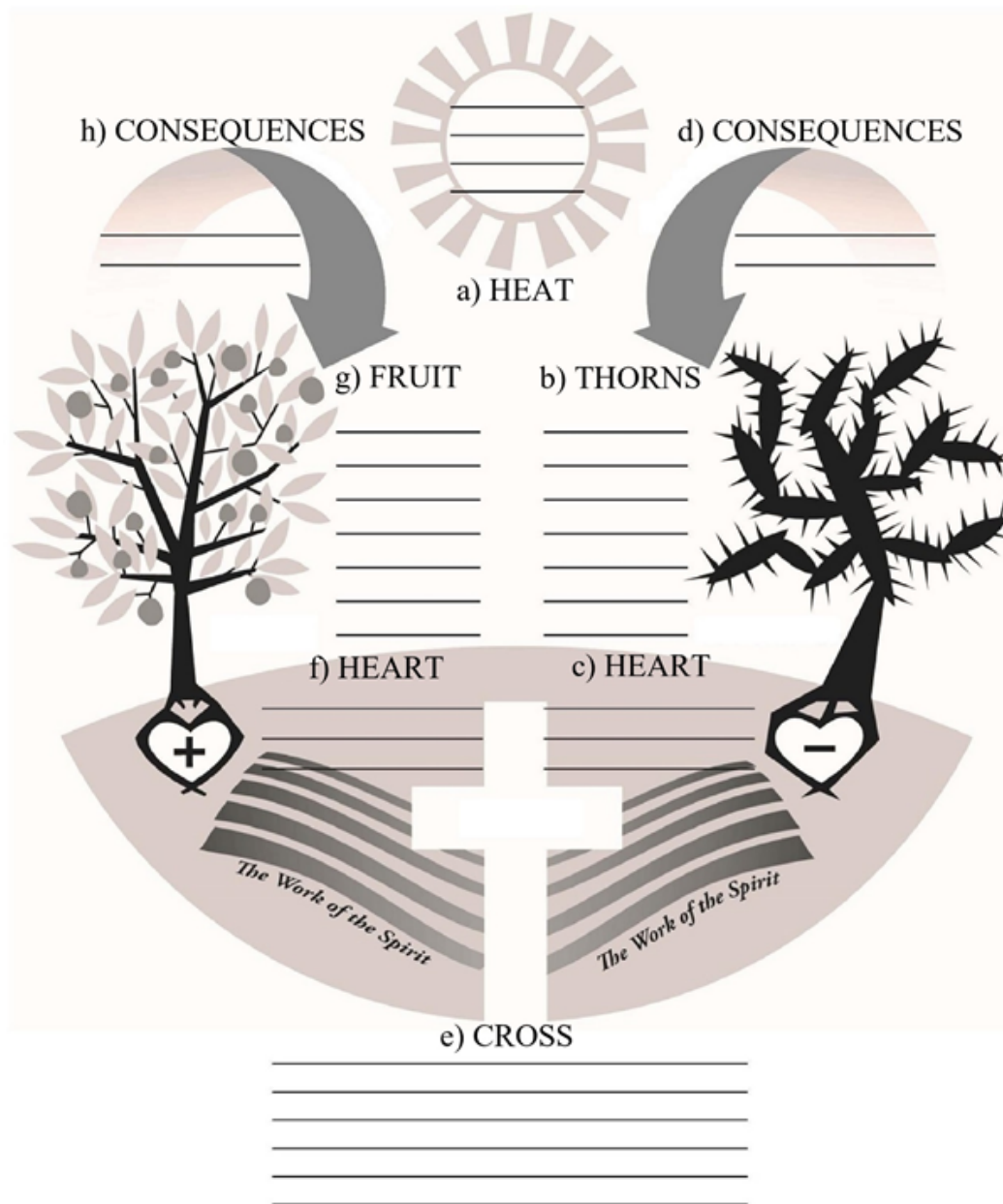
Q2b. How does Jeremiah describe the blessed man?

Q3. What are the contrasts/differences between the blessed man and the cursed man?

Q4a. How is what we trust in related to what we worship?

Q4b. How does who or what we worship affects our lives?

Q5. Use the diagram below (See Appendix for explanation), which is adapted from Jeremiah 17, and fill in the ways each of the categories of heat, thorns (fruitlessness), heart, fruit, consequences is described in Jeremiah 17.



Two Trees Diagram adapted from Lane, How People Change: How Christ Changes Us by His Grace: Study Guide, 49

Read John 7:37-39

“37 On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” 39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

Q6a. What does Jesus offer to those who are thirsty? How does it relate back to the tree diagram above?

Q6b. Recall the prophecy in Jeremiah. How does worshipping Jesus and trusting in Him help us to bear fruit in difficult situations or relationships?

Q7. What is the real cause of difficulties and fruitlessness in our relationships?

Q8. If we understand that our real problem is with our hearts and what it worships, what should we try to address when we try to help one another change?

Q9. How does the reality of living water offered by Jesus help us to address the issues with our heart?

Q10. Break into pairs or threes. Share an example of a regular conflict in one of your relationships. The more specific you can be the better.

Fill in the diagram below using the following questions to help you.

10a) Heat

What was the situation? What happens to you that brings pressure, temptation, trouble, beguilement? When, where, and with whom do you struggle? In other words, what is the significant context, situation, or circumstance that pushes your buttons?[1]

10b) Thorns

How are you reacting? What do you typically do? Thoughts, words, actions, emotions, choices, relationships? How are you tempted to react?[2]

10c) Heart/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’?[3]

10d) Consequences

What are the consequences and ripple effects? How do your reactions affect your relationships, mood, situation, etc.?[4]

10e) Cross

Who is God – relevant to this struggle? What does He say? What does He promise? What does He do?
How does Jesus' work address this heart problem?[5]

10f) Faith

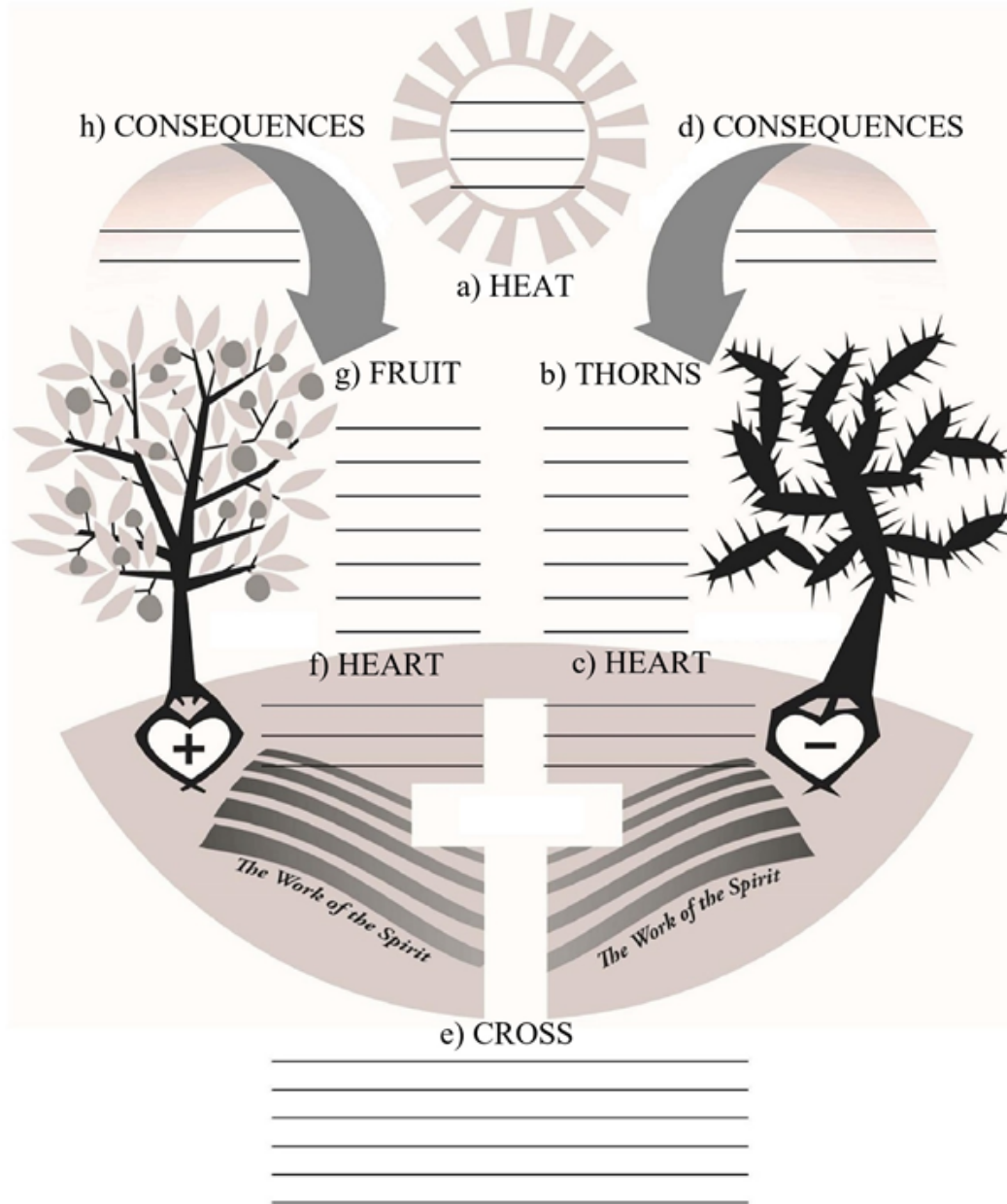
Respond to God from the heart. Stop. Listen. Ponder. Turn. Trust. Come. Seek. Ask. Talk. Transact with Him. How can you have a candid, pointed conversation with God?[6]

10g) Act

Respond constructively into your situation. Speak. Act. Do. Don't do. Choose. How will you show intelligent love for the other person in the relationship?[7]

10h) Consequences

What would the consequences be? How do God (e) and faith (f) and love (g) create ripple effects in your relationships, mood, situation, etc.?[8]



Two Trees Diagram adapted from Lane, *How People Change: How Christ Changes Us by His Grace: Study Guide*, 49

Apply Practically

Pray for each other in your pairs.

[1] Adapted from Powlison, Eight Questions to help you walk through the change process. Lecture notes.

[2] Powlison, Eight Questions to help you walk through the change process. Lecture notes.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Powlison, Eight Questions to help you walk through the change process. Lecture notes.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

Appendix: Brief explanation of the 3 Trees model

The diagram consists of the following elements:

1. **Heat** - this represents the surrounding/circumstances. Helpful questions would be to ask about the exact situation, and also the internal feelings that the people involved may have and the actions taken.
2. **Thorns** - represents the sinful behaviour/thoughts and consequences that comes as a response to the heat. However, the reason for the thorns is not due to the heat per se, the heat merely provides the occasion for the sinful response. The root of the thorns are found in the heart.
3. **Heart(negative)** - the beliefs and attitudes that give rise to the thorns. For example, this could refer to idolatry, unbelief in God and pride.
4. **Fruit** - represents the behaviour/thoughts that expresses the fruit of the Spirit and its consequences. Again, the heat merely provides the occasion for the fruit to come forth and is not itself the reason for the fruit.
5. **Heart(positive)** - the beliefs and attitudes that give rise to the fruit. For example, this could refer to faith and humility before God, trust in God's word, a heart softened by the saving love of Jesus Christ.
6. **Cross** - The third tree is critical. The first two trees refer to 1) the thorns connected to the heart(negative) and 2) the fruits connected to the heart(positive). The key is that the Cross encourages faith & repentance towards to heart(negative), convicting sin by the work of the Spirit, and through bringing us back to the foot of the cross again and again, shape and mould our hearts towards the good tree that bears good fruit.