BRING ON THE HEAT! ANSWERS

Examining My Heart When Trouble Comes

Key verses:

- **Luke 6:43-45** KJV - For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

- **Mark 7:21-23** KJV - For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

- **Jeremiah 17:5-10** KJV - Thus saith the LORD; Cursed [be] the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, [in] a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed [is] the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit. The heart [is] deceitful above all [things], and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, [I] try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, [and] according to the fruit of his doings.

- **James 4:1-2** KJV - From whence [come] wars and fightings among you? [come they] not hence, [even] of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

- **1 John 3:15** KJV - Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.
**OBJECTIVE:** This study works through The Three Trees graphic to help me understand what is going on in my heart that causes me to react/respond the way I do to life’s difficult circumstances.

**HEAT.**
- All believers will face the pressures and difficult circumstances of life.
  - The Heat could be: a lost job, financial pressure, death of loved one, tragedy, trauma, natural disaster, pain, illness, disability, "addiction" (cravings), relational conflict, divorce, unfulfilled longing (lost hope/dreams), rebellious children.
  - It could be the result of my sin, the sin of others done against me, or the result of suffering not brought on by sin.
  - The Heat will bring out either good or evil responses from me.

**Tree 1. Dead-Thorny Tree.** This tree produces little or no godly fruit in hot or pressure-filled circumstances. At its root is an idolatrous, self-centered heart.

**My Heart Responds.** Instead of responding to life in a godly way **when** the HEAT comes, I respond with panic, worry, anger, rage, bitterness, irritation, resentment, pride, jealousy, envy, lying, selfishness, revenge, harshness, impatience, gossip, irrational thinking, excuses, excessive or restrictive eating, over spending, escaping, control, idolatry, etc.

BAD FRUIT comes from how I respond and react to life’s problems. Bad fruit **dishonors** God. It reveals what is in already my heart (Luke 6:43-45; Mark 7:21-23, James 4:1-2; Jeremiah 17:5-10). It is an expression of what I am **worshiping** in place of or more than God.

A BAD ROOT is the reason I produce Bad Fruit. This is the **settled condition** of my heart (thoughts, motives, attitudes, emotions, and desires) that causes me to sin, live in the flesh, and turn to **Idolatry**. I turn even good things into acts of self-worship: Love, Intimacy, Safety, Security, Respect, Significance, Comfort, Ease, Healthy, Appearance, Money, Possessions, etc. I **expect** and **demand**: Man's Approval, my "rights" to be heard and valued, Power, Control, Performance (mine and others), Recognition, pain-free, conflict-free life, etc.

**Defining Idolatry:** “The heart is a factory of idols. It’s not so much what I want that gets me into trouble, but when I want it too much.” **John Calvin**

Idolatry is:
- Saying, “God is not enough for me…I want this more than I want Him.”
- Anything/Anyone that begins to **capture** my heart, mind, and affections more than God.
- Living on substitutes for God and exchanging the one true, living God for a **counterfeit**.

**Identifying idolatry can be done through asking a series of questions:**
1. What/who have I placed above God in my life? Is He first-place and foremost in my heart and life?
2. What/who am I wanting right now more than pleasing and honoring God?
3. What/who do I want, desire, seek, aim for, hope for?
4. What/who do I worry about or most and fear?
5. What/who consumes my thoughts, time, and resources?
6. Where do I look for happiness, meaning, and fulfillment? “If only I had this I would be happy, content, satisfied.”
7. What sin am I willing to commit: (1) to get what/who I want; (2) if I don’t get what/who I want, or (3) if I’m afraid I’ll lose something/someone that I want?

A “Noisy Soul” will be the result of a Bad Root that produces Bad Fruit in me. This is described as a self-absorbed soul that loud like a noisy gong or clanging cymbals (1 Cor. 13:1). Living by my feelings will generate overwhelming “noise” that results in guilt, un forgiveness, discontent, fear, worry, anxiety, anger, despair, etc. In order to shut out, numb the pain, or avoid the consequences of these, I am prone to turn to distractions: addictive behaviors (cravings for alcohol, drugs, food, gambling, sex); gossip; sports/hobbies; and entertainment (TV, movies, Internet, gaming, etc.).

1 Corinthians 13:1. If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

My only hope to change my Noisy Soul, the Bad Fruit, and Bad Root of my heart begins with:

Tree 2: The Cross (Christ’s substitutionary death on my behalf). The Cross:

- Tells me I am guilty and separated from God because of my sin.
- Provided forgiveness for all of my sins—past, present, and future.
- Provides the only way for me to live a new, transformed life that will bring glory and honor to God.
- Tells me I am loved and forgiven!
- Brings Peace and reconciliation between God and me, thereby providing a way for me to have peace with others. I will not have peace with others until I am at peace with God.

Romans 5:1-2 KJV - Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

My REDEEMER, through His death on the Cross, reconciles and restores me to God and shows me how to daily live out The Gospel (The “Good News”). The Gospel is the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, who always did the will of His Father. It is His:

1) Incarnation—He left the glory of heaven, took on my humanity, so He could bleed and die for me. Hebrews 9:22
2) Sinless, Perfect Life—This is now my righteous record and standing before God. He is my example for how to live and die to self.
3) Substitutionary Death—On the Cross, He bore the penalty for my sin.
4) Bodily Resurrection—I now have hope of eternal life and the ability to live a new, transformed life while on earth.
5) Ascension—He is praying for me and is preparing a place for me.

Means of Grace: As I turn to God in FAITH and REPENTANCE, He uses five MEANS OF GRACE to help me grow and change into His image:

- Philippians 1:6 KJV - Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ:
- Romans 8:29 KJV - For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

1) The Living Water. Jesus is my perfect example and standard and my very righteousness. My thirsty and needy soul comes to my Savior and drinks…first for salvation and then for my sanctification. Jesus knows what I am going through. He knows what
it’s like to be me!

- **John 7:38 KJV** - He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.
- **2 Corinthians 5:21 KJV** - For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.
- **Philippians 2:1-11**

2) **Holy Spirit.** God dwelling in me. I am His temple. He is my advocate, comforter, counselor, intercessor, and strengthener. He provides me with assurance of my salvation and conviction of my sin. He illuminates the Scriptures so that I can grow in knowledge and understanding of God.

- **Romans 12:1-2.** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.
- **1 Corinthians 6:19-20.** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.
- **1 Corinthians 3:16.** Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?

3) **Prayer.** God desires communication from me. Though He already knows what I need before I even ask, He desires me to come to Him, in faith, and share the things that are on my heart. I am to make ALL things a matter of prayer. (1 Thess. 5:17). Throughout Scripture, expectant prayer always preceded the mighty works of God. Prayer is an action that acknowledges I must depend upon the Lord, not myself. It is humility and maturity rolled into an other-world dependence that expects and trust God to always do what is perfect and good in my life. Jesus prayed. It was His habit. He desired to talk to His Father. How much more, then, should I pray? The HEAT and pressures of life demand it!

   **Handouts:** Helpful Method – “ACTS”: A-Adoration; C-Confession; T-Thanksgiving; and S-Supplication. **ALSO: “7 MINUTES WITH GOD”**

4) **Scriptures.** Everything I need to know about God is found in the Bible. God’s Word is the only authoritative source for me to know how to live the Christian life. It has everything I need for living a life of godliness that will please and glorify God. I must make it a daily habit to submit my soul and mind to God’s Word so that I can be mastered by it. I will make all my decisions based upon His direct commands and indirect wisdom principles in Scripture.

- **2 Timothy 3:16-17 KJV** - All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.
- **2 Peter 1:3-4 KJV** - According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

5) **Community.** God uses His people and His Church to provide: encouragement, exhortation, instruction, training, accountability, fellowship, discipleship, a place to use
my spiritual gifts, a way to express corporate worship and adoration of my great God, and a way to evangelize the lost in my community and around the world.

“This place” and with “these people” is where I must be as often as I can!

**Hebrews 10:24-26 KJV** - And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some [is]; but exhorting [one another]: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.

#### GOOD ROOT
will be developed in me as I humbly yield to and apply God’s Means of Grace in my life. My heart (thinking, attitudes, motives, desires) will be transformed, renewed, and changed. My view of God, others, myself, my life, and my circumstances will change. I will seek God’s kingdom and purposes and bear much **GOOD FRUIT**.

A.W. Tozer: “What comes into our minds when we think of God is the most important thing about us. The basic questions about my life and the fundamental issues of my heart must be about God. Do I tremble before Him in awe/fear/reverence of His Holiness and Majesty?!

Tree 3. Fruit-Bearing Tree. As I continue to seek God’s kingdom and purposes, He will produce much **GOOD FRUIT** in me: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). And I will be enabled to fulfill God’s command to **love** and **serve** Him and others.

- **Galatians 5:22-23 KJV** - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
- **Matthew 22:36-40 KJV** - Master, which [is] the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second [is] like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

A “**Quiet Soul**” will result from A Good Root that is producing produced Good Fruit. My soul will be quiet, at rest, peaceful, content, and joyful...EVEN IN THE MIDST OF THE STORM! I will be at peace with God and man (Rom. 12:18). I will have a **calm assurance** that what God is doing is always good and best for me.

- **Psalm 131:1-3 KJV** - [[A Song of degrees of David.]] LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul [is] even as a weaned child. Let Israel hope in the LORD from henceforth and for ever.
- **Psalm 62:5 KJV** - My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation [is] from him.
- **Zephaniah 3:17 KJV** - The LORD thy God in the midst of thee [is] mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest [quiet you] in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.
- **John 14:27 KJV** - Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.
- **Romans 12:18 KJV** - If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

#### REAPING CONSEQUENCES:

- The effects/results of my choices, behavior, and responses will REAP certain consequences in my life.
- The Good Fruit/Good Root will cause me to reap a quiet soul, blessings, favor, peace, contentment, and joy.
The Bad Fruit/Bad Root will cause me to reap a noisy soul, sorrow, and ruin.
- Galatians 6:7-8 KJV - Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.
- Proverbs 13:15 KJV - Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors [is] hard.
- See also Jeremiah 17:5-10

Important Points To Ponder and Take Into My Heart:
1. **Everything** that God ordains, orchestrates, allows, permits in my life is always for His glory and for my good and growth (progressive sanctification).
2. God is preparing me for His kingdom here on earth and ultimately in heaven. But yet, my kingdom of self wants to take over.
3. God will graciously use the **Heat** (my sin, trials, struggles, suffering, pressures, difficult circumstances and relationships) to take me to the next place of growth.
4. All of the **Heat** that comes into my life is from a good, loving, wise, kind, and faithful God for the purpose of glorifying Him and bringing me to a better knowledge and understanding of Him.
5. The **Heat** will help me grow in love, obedience, and dependence upon Christ alone.
6. No **Heat** is wasted or without purpose if it causes me to look more to my Savior and to look more like my Savior.
7. God's ultimate intent is to rescue me from myself and my kingdom of one and to enhance His kingdom.
8. My ability to do anything good and right is always kidnapped by my divided heart, my fallen, sinful nature, and my pursuit of idolatry.
9. God is always at work to expose the sin and idolatry in my life: lust, greed, jealousy, selfishness, pride, fear, anger, bitterness, unforgiveness, doubt, hopelessness, materialism, judgmental attitudes, anxiety, worry, discontent, impatience, and any other form of ungodliness.
10. God desires change in me. He will graciously expose my sin to bring about that change.
    - **Numbers 32:23** KJV - But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.
11. I so often say, “God, if You would just change him/her or change my circumstances, then my life would be so much better, and then I could serve You.”
12. I am so prone to pursue the wrong things. I want my kingdom of self-rule over my Creator's kingdom of authority, rule, and sovereignty over my life.
13. Praise God that He is in the business of changing my heart, desires, and expectations.
14. He will give me the desires of my heart (Psalm 37:3-6), and He will be the One that puts them there!
    - **Psalm 37:3-6** KJV - Trust in the LORD, and do good; [so] shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring [it] to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.
15. He works to reshape my desires into His desires and to transform my heart so that I will think, desire, speak, and act in ways consistent with who He is and what He is doing in my life.
16. Through His **Means of Grace**, God is personally and intimately at work completing what He began in me when He saved me (Philippians 1:6), and as He does, He is preparing me for my ultimate destination...**eternity with Him!**
• Philippians 1:6 KJV - Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ.

17. I can be assured that Christ is interceding for me right now to bring about and accomplish His work in me!

18. Instead of running from God and contending with Him when I face the **Heat**, I can trust in His love, mercy, and grace knowing that He always is at work in my life.

19. Even when He disciplines/corrects me, I will know that He is at work in me. **How receptive to His discipline am I?**

**Discipline Scriptures:**

1 Peter 4:12-19 KJV - Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy [are ye]; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or [as] a thief, or [as] an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if [any man suffer] as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time [is come] that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if [it] first [begin] at us, what shall the end [be] of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls [to him] in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

Hebrews 12:4-12 KJV - Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected [us], and we gave [them] reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened [us] after their own pleasure; but he for [our] profit, that [we] might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

Proverbs 3:12 KJV - For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son [in whom] he delighteth.
Summary:
1. God graciously brings Heat into my life to:
   a. Expose my sin.
   b. Cause me to cry out to Him in total dependence.
   c. Allow me to know Him more as I suffer for His sake.
   - 1 Peter 2:21 KJV - For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.
   d. Reckon myself dead to sin and alive to God; thereby saying, “I am dead to that! This sin no longer has a hold on me!”

Reckon. 3049 logízomai (the root of the English terms "logic, logical") — properly, compute, "take into account"; reckon (come to a "bottom-line"), i.e. reason to a logical conclusion (decision). I reckon, count, charge with; reason, decide, conclude.

Romans 6:10-13 KJV - For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members [as] instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members [as] instruments of righteousness unto God.

2. IT WILL BE WORTH IT ALL! The Heat…trials, sufferings, hardships, and unfulfilled longings (lost hopes and dreams) that I will experience throughout my life on earth will be the only ones I will ever have to go through!

3. As evidence of God’s truth, power, authority, and glory, He will bring about my:
   a. Regenerated life--God putting His Spirit in me and saving me.
   b. Sanctified life--God growing, changing, and completing me. (The is evidence and assurance that I have been regenerated!)

Am I A Follower of Christ?
If I am a true follower of Christ—one that has been “born again” through His saving grace, I will learn to look at the Heat and ask God to bring to light (expose) the sin (thorns) in my life so that I can get rid of them (put them off) and put on new Godly character that will glorify Him.

If am not a follower of Christ—one that is still any enemy of God (Romans 5:8), He will graciously use the Heat to cause me to turn to Him in faith, trust, and repentance to receive Him as my Lord and Savior.

PRAYER:
Now, when I see and feel the HEAT in my life and other’s lives, I can pray: “God, HELP ME embrace the Heat rather than fear and fight it. Remind me, Lord, how You are using these things in my life and the lives of the people I love to change us…perhaps to even bring someone to faith in You!”

4. A SWEET FORETASTE AND BLESSED ASSURANCE:
   Foretaste. A slight and partial experience, knowledge, or taste of something to come in the future; anticipation.
   - Romans 8:23 KJV - And not only [they], but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, [to wit], the
redemption of our body.

- Ephesians 1:14 KJV - Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.
- 2 Corinthians 5:5 KJV - Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing [is] God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.
- Hebrews 10:22 KJV - Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.
- 1 Peter 1:8 KJV - Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see [him] not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:
- 1 John 3:1-3 KJV - Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.
- Job 23:10 KJV - But he knoweth the way that I take: [when] he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.
- Psalm 73:25-26 KJV - Whom have I in heaven [but thee]? and [there is] none upon earth [that] I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: [but] God [is] the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

MOMENTARY LIGHT AFFLICTION: WILL EXPLAIN SMILING DOG WHEN WE MAKE APPLICATION!

My present sufferings and unfulfilled longings (those things not caused by my sin) are but a reminder and a sweet foretaste of what is to come when I am finally with Him!

2 Corinthians 4:17 KJV - For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding [and] eternal weight of glory.

5. I can be assured that:
   a. God will never tempt me to sin, but He will use the Heat to expose my sin so that I can go to the Cross (the Gospel) where all of my sin (past, present, and future) has already been dealt with.
   b. God will never give me more than I can handle. (1 Cor. 10:13). I know that I will never be completely free from all sin while on earth, but by God’s grace, as I grow in Christ, I will see a decrease in my sinful habits and an increase in righteous thinking and behavior.
   c. Through REPENTANCE and FAITH, God will restore my fellowship with Him and others that I have sinned against.
   d. God will use His MEANS OF GRACE to change and grow me.

6. As I humble and submit myself before God:
   a. I will realize how wise He is to bring the Heat into my life to expose my sinful heart and to bring me to the Cross where I will find forgiveness and restoration.
   b. I will realize that Jesus Christ took my sin and my penalty upon Himself, declared me righteous, and gave me His perfect record. My standing with God is secure because He now sees me through the righteousness of Christ.
   c. This is my motivation to change, to renew my mind, and to put off sinful behavior and responses!
   d. This will cause me to say: “Bring on the Heat, Lord!”