



TREE OF UNBELIEF

And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.

—Colossians 2:6-7

TREE OF UNBELIEF

The Fruit of the Spirit is produced by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control are all evidence that God is making us more like himself. As believers, we want our lives to be marked by this fruit. And this fruit is produced in us as the result of the faith that is at work within us.

In Luke 6, Jesus reminds us that, “A good tree can’t produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can’t produce good fruit. A tree is identified by its fruit.” If our faith is identified by its fruit, then it makes sense that when our heart is tangled with unbelief, it is going to yield fruit that has been corrupted by that unbelief.

This guide will help you examine not only the rotten fruit produced by your unbelief, but also the root system and the soil that causes it to grow. It may be helpful to watch this [video](#) explanation before you get started.

Use the graphic provided on the last page to label your own tree, or draw your own as you work through the prompts below.

ROTTEN FRUIT: MY SIN STRUGGLES

Even though Christ has given us a new nature, we still struggle with sin.

► IDENTIFY A FEW MAJOR SINFUL BEHAVIORS AND ATTITUDES THAT HAVE AFFECTED YOUR LIFE AND RELATIONSHIPS.

Clarifying Questions: How do I act? What sin do I struggle with? What frustrates or disappoints the people closest to me?

Examples: anger, control, fear, addiction, critical spirit, materialism, meddling, exaggerating, manipulation, hiding, boasting, nagging, divisiveness, escape, demanding, arrogance.

Dig Deeper:

- What do others see in me?
- How do these struggles impact my relationships?
- What sin has been a lifelong struggle?
- What causes me to have an intense, emotional response?



DISEASED ROOTS: DESIRES THAT INFLUENCE MY BEHAVIOR

It's not just our evil desires that corrupt us; our good desires can too. When good desires become ultimate desires, we call them idols. When our idols are threatened, it creates conflict, but when they are fed, we are temporarily comforted and satisfied. Unfortunately, all idols eventually disappoint.

► IDENTIFY IDOLS IN YOUR LIFE THAT ARE DRIVING YOUR BEHAVIOR.

Clarifying Questions: What do I want? What do I fight for? What do I love? What can I not live without?

Examples: power, status, intimacy, comfort, approval, accomplishment, possessions, order, connection, justice, gratification.

Dig Deeper:

- What is my greatest nightmare?
- What do I worry about most?
- When I feel lonely or out of control, what do I reach for?
- What makes me angry?
- What is weighing on me when I close my eyes to go to sleep or when I first wake up?

SEED OF UNBELIEF: LIE THAT I BELIEVE ABOUT GOD

Our sinful nature is bent on being suspicious of God's character. Distorted beliefs about God lead us to try to meet our needs apart from him.

► IDENTIFY A LIE THAT MAY BE FUELING YOUR IDOLATRY AND DRIVING YOUR BEHAVIOR.

Clarifying Questions: When life doesn't go my way, what am I tempted to believe about God? What attribute(s) of God do I find difficult to believe or embrace?

Examples: I don't believe God is good, so I need to provide for myself. I don't believe he is in control, so I need to protect myself. I don't believe he loves me, so I need the love and approval of others.

Dig Deeper:

Pay attention to when you feel strong emotions, become controlling, or seek the approval of others, etc. In those moments ask yourself:

- What is it that I really want?
- What is it that I am afraid of?
- What do I really believe about God in this moment?

SOIL THAT SHAPED ME: HELPS ME UNDERSTAND MYSELF

Our pain, past, and current circumstances often become the fertile ground in which a lie takes root and distorts our view of God. Our past and our story—both good and bad—shapes our view of God and others.

► IDENTIFY MAJOR LIFE EVENTS AND CHARACTERISTICS THAT HAVE SHAPED HOW YOU VIEW YOURSELF AND GOD.

Clarifying Questions: Why am I this way? What has influenced me? What happened to me?

Examples: significant relationships and experiences, including harms to me, harms by me, and ways I experienced the brokenness of this world. Also, ways that I have been successful and achieved goals that influenced how I view the world.

Dig Deeper:

Consider these categories to uncover parts of your story that may be contributing to your inaccurate view of God:

- Significant losses and hardships
- Family relationships



- Sexual experiences
- Times of neglect or abuse
- Gifts, talents, achievements
- Economic status

TRUTH THAT TRANSFORMS: REPLACING THE LIE WITH THE TRUTH

Unless I repent of the seed of unbelief that is causing the fruit to grow, there will be no lasting change. Willpower and self-control might change my behavior for a while, but since actions spring from the heart, lasting spiritual transformation only comes when we replace the lies we believe with the truth.

► IDENTIFY THE TRUTH YOU NEED TO TELL YOURSELF IN ORDER TO SILENCE THE LIES AND DO BATTLE WITH YOUR UNBELIEF.

Clarifying Questions: What truth can directly take aim at the lie you are believing?

Examples: God is good; therefore, I can trust him to provide for me. God is in control; therefore, I can entrust difficult situations to him. God says he loves me; therefore, I am secure in him.

Dig Deeper:

- When I am struggling, how will I use this truth to help me combat the lie?
- What means of grace could I engage to aid me in my fight for faith (ex. prayer, memorizing Scripture, biblical community, worship, Sabbath)?
- How can I lead myself spiritually in order to root myself more deeply in Christ?
- How have I neglected feeding myself spiritually?

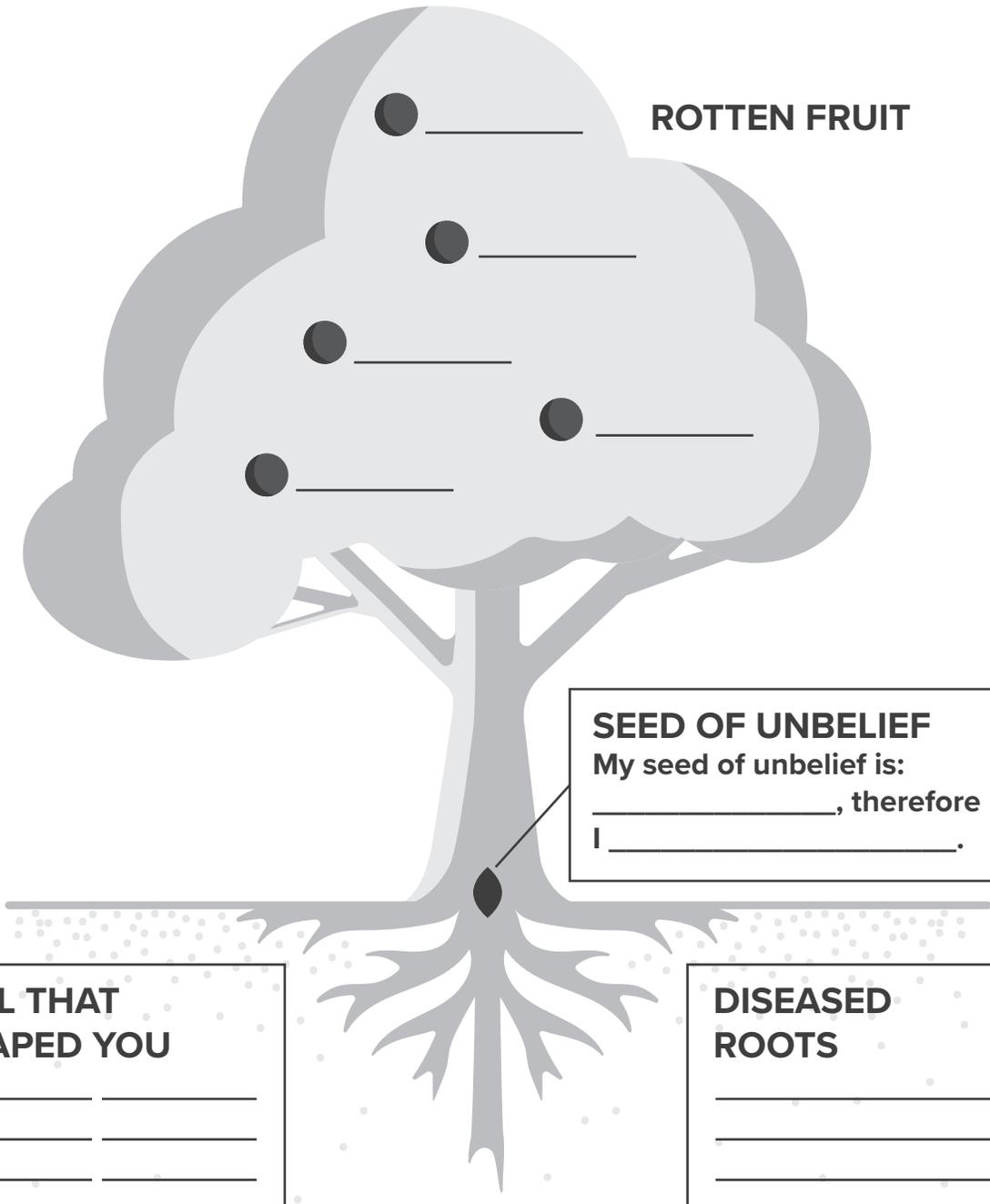
ABIDING IN CHRIST: STAYING CONNECTED TO THE SOURCE OF LIFE

Hopefully you identified a core lie that you believe about God and the truth that you need to combat that lie. This is where we cannot be complacent and think that our passive belief in Christ is a one time event. As we are reminded in Colossians, our faith requires an ongoing, active believing. Through that process, the Spirit produces Christ's nature in us. Our job is to stay connected to Christ; his job is to produce the fruit.

► FIND AND MEMORIZE A SCRIPTURE PASSAGE THAT REINFORCES THE TRUTH YOU NEED TO BELIEVE.

Spiritual power and true transformation come when we humbly abandon ourselves to the truths of the gospel and allow them to transform our hearts and minds. By continually turning to Christ, remembering his work on our behalf, and abiding with him, we can grow more and more into the mature image-bearers he designed us to be.





ROTTEN FRUIT

SEED OF UNBELIEF

My seed of unbelief is:
_____, therefore
I _____.

SOIL THAT SHAPED YOU

DISEASED ROOTS

TRUTH THAT TRANSFORMS

God _____,
therefore I _____.

Scripture verse: _____

