

# Fruit to Root

Adapted from *Gospel Fluency: Speaking the Truths of Jesus into the Everyday Stuff of Life* by Jeff Vanderstelt

## GROWING IN GOSPEL FLUENCY

“Part of our job in growing in gospel fluency is paying attention to the overflow of our hearts. What comes out in the form of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors finds its origin inside of us. Too often, we focus our attention on changing the external rather than addressing the internal. But Jesus was very clear that what defiles us proceeds from inside our hearts—our beliefs and our motives. The fruit of our lives comes from the roots of our faith. Just as a thermometer detects a fever, what we see or experience tells us about the gospel health of our hearts. So we need to learn to trace the fruit back to the root.” Jeff Vanderstelt

## LEARNING TO TRACE THE FRUIT BACK TO THE ROOT

The things we experience are considered the external “fruit” on the tree. Our response to these experiences can also be considered fruit.

On top of the fruit in the tree diagram, write the things you maybe experiencing such as anxiety, fear, worry, desire for control, etc.

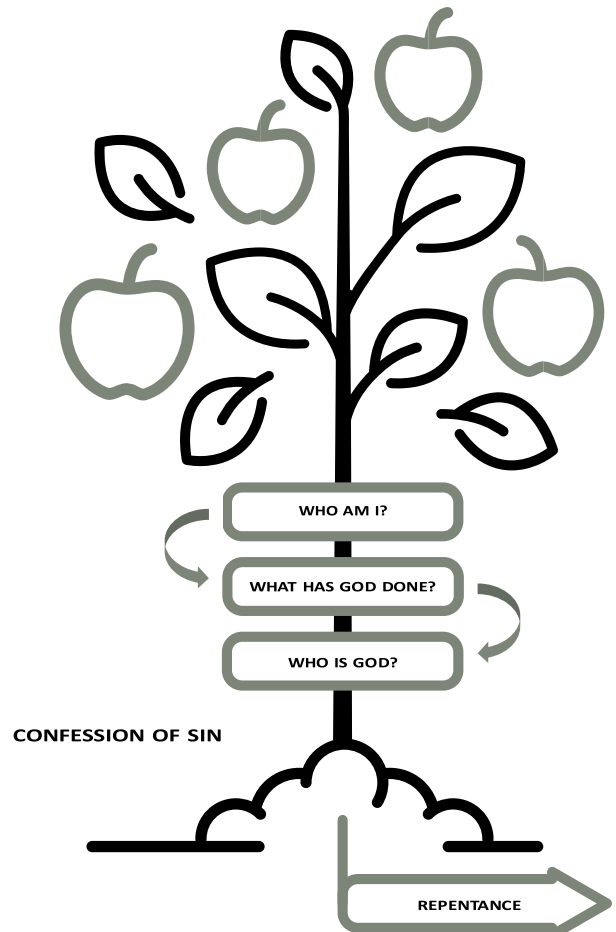
Then write the answers to the following questions:

1. **Who am I?** (What are you believing about yourself right now? Who do you perceive who you are in this situation?)
2. **What has God done?**
3. **Who is God?**

We need to speak our beliefs out loud to God so we can become aware of what is going on inside of us. Honest proclamation of what we are believing in the moment, no matter how painful to admit, leads to transformation. This is confession.

Jeff Vanderstelt gives an example of how he and his wife Jayne processed her anxiety related to their children. Anxiety and fear were the fruit. **Answering the questions revealed the root of unbelief:**

- **Who am I?** “I’m not in control but I believe I have to be.”
- **What has God done?** “I believe he has stopped loving me. I believe he has lost control of what’s going on with our children. And ... he’s abandoned me.”
- **Who is God?** “He’s unloving. He’s impotent. He is absent.”



Unbelief can take several forms. We don't believe because we lack the truth about God. We believe lies about God or ourselves, or we fail to put our faith in what we know to be true of God.

"All sin stems from wrong beliefs—lies we believe—and ultimately from our unbelief in Jesus. And because we generally don't go beyond the fruit to the root, we end up aiming at behavior modification instead of gospel transformation... We need more than ourselves and our personal efforts. We need the truth. We need the power of God to save us. We need the gospel!" – Jeff Vanderstelt

### FROM ROOT TO FRUIT

Once you trace the fruit to the root, invite the Spirit to reveal the truth of who God is and what he has done for you in Christ. Ask him to give you the ability to see and believe the truth, repent from lies or unbelief, and turn to God in faith through Jesus.

**Work your way back up from the root to the fruit. Ask the questions from the bottom up:**

1.. Who is God?

2. What has God done?

3. Who am I?

Returning to the example from the book, Jayne continued to speak the truths about God and herself. She was being transformed by the renewing of her mind (Romans 12:2):

- **Who is God?** "He is love. He is powerful and in control. He is present."
- **What has God done?** "Jesus died for me. He rose again from the dead. I have the Spirit of God in me."
- **Who am I?** "I'm loved. I'm not alone. I am more than a conqueror through him."

"This work requires knowing the Gospel and spending regular time reading the Bible so as to be more equipped to speak the truth of God to the circumstances or situations you find yourself or others in." – Jeff Vanderstelt

Becoming more and more Christ-like results in the fruits of the Spirit such as love, joy, peace, etc. But remember, you can't do this alone. Immerse yourself in a community to become more gospel-fluent together.

