

Thorns: Why Do We Get Entangled?

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[0:00] In Deuteronomy 5, who can tell me right off the bat without looking what's in Deuteronomy 5?! Ten Commandments. Right, we think of Exodus 20 as the primary place you look for the Ten Commandments, but they were also given a second time in Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy is second law, the second giving of the law to remind the people before they go into the promised land and we have those Ten Commandments recorded here. I will come to those in a few minutes, but we want to ask a question this morning and that is, why do we do the things that we do? Specifically, why do we sin?

And we want to look at the answer to that question this morning so that we might rightly deal with the sin that remains in our hearts. If you go to the doctor to find out why you feel miserable, and he diagnoses you with an infection, and it's an accurate diagnosis, and then he prescribes you a prescription, some antibiotics, and you go and you get them and you take them, and you begin to feel better. You received an accurate diagnosis, you received the proper treatment for it, and so you feel better. Well, say you go to the doctor and he diagnoses you with an infection, and he prescribes an antibiotic, but he misdiagnoses you. You actually have cancer. The treatment that he's prescribed isn't going to make you feel any better. The antibiotic isn't going to help you. It's not going to make you well, because you didn't receive the proper diagnosis. And so it is in our spiritual life. We need an accurate diagnosis in order to deal properly with the problem. If the problem is that I do bad things,

I sin, and the solution is I need to stop. I've got this bad behavior. That's the problem. The solution is quit it. But if the problem runs much deeper than that, to my desires and my motivations and to what I worship, then just trying to stop my bad behavior won't be enough. We need a diagnosis that goes deeper than just the surface. We need to know what's going on in the heart. And then we need a solution that will deal with the heart. In the book we're studying, *How People Change*, it helps us do just that, to give us an accurate diagnosis of what's going on in us when we produce thorny behavior. Last week we talked about the thorns. We face the heat, bad behavior, thorns, sin, rears its ugly head. That's what entangles us. This week, why do we get entangled? Why do we demonstrate that thorny, wicked behavior? What's behind it? And the answer to that question makes all the difference as to whether we make progress in our growth in grace and our change and becoming more and more like Christ. If we don't get it right, we say, well, I need to change a few things about my behavior, then we're not going to get at the root of the issue and it won't be solved. So let's talk about some misdiagnoses to begin with. And we covered a lot of these in greater depth back in earlier chapters in the book, so we'll just mention them here.

We can blame our sin on all sorts of things. The people around us. My problem is them. It's my family background. It's my circumstances. It's the bad day that I've had. My body made me do it. All of these things are reasons people will give for their bad behavior and surely they do play a part in the thorny behavior that we demonstrate all too often. The circumstances aren't irrelevant, but they are not the cause of our sin. But often that's how problems are diagnosed. If you just remove the things that trigger your temper, then you won't have a problem with the temper anymore. If one of the things that really makes you mad and gets you hot under the collar is if you get home from work and dinner isn't on the table, that makes you mad. That makes you upset. The easy response to that is to say, well, your wife just needs to work a little bit harder to have supper on the table on time. And that removes the trigger to your temper and so you don't lose your temper anymore. You just deal with the outward circumstance. Or if it's your kid's toys all over the floor that makes you angry, then they need to work harder at cleaning up after themselves. You put the blame on someone else for your problem. And the solutions to your problem, just get rid of the things that make you mad, doesn't ever get at the root of why you're getting mad. It doesn't get at the heart.

You say, I'm lazy because that's the only example I ever had from my dad. That he didn't work and he didn't teach me to work and so I don't know how to work.

And so I'm lazy like he was. It's not my fault. That may be true that that was part of your upbringing, but you are still responsible for your laziness. Again, my body made me do it. My self-esteem is too low. We could go on and on, but notice the quote there first on your handout. External conditions are only the occasion for sin, not the cause. Difficulties in life do not cause sin. Our background, relationship, situation, physical condition only provide the opportunity for our thoughts, words, and actions to reveal whatever is already in our hearts. Your problem with sin is already in your heart. The things around you just provide the occasion. Now we've had a little heat at the Hoke House this week. Nothing serious and in the big scheme of things it gets really small and it's going to sound silly almost to you. But in the middle of it, it sounds, it feels big. It feels like there's lots of heat. We're leaving tomorrow for New Jersey, Lord willing, if the roads are clear out there. And so we've been packing and Aaron's been packing and getting the kids ready and all of this stuff. And then our youngest son has decided in the last two weeks, he'd been sleeping through the night real well for several months. In the last couple weeks, his society doesn't want to do that anymore. He's rolling over and on accident and then he can't roll back over to go back to sleep and then he's awake and then he's hungry. And anyway, so we've been up in the night and Friday night was my night, Saturday morning to get up with him and I got up about four or something and I was feeling a little heat and by God's grace, he brought our Sunday school lessons to mind. Well, that's good.

[6:25] And I was feeling pretty good about myself. Aaron, you're in the heat. Let's not lose it. Let's just take it and feed him and go back to bed. And I was pretty pleased with myself. I wasn't mad, but then I'm burping him. And he doesn't sit still. He's turning his head back and forth and he spits up and it goes all down his front. And that did it. It was the last straw. I forgot about the Sunday school lesson and I got really upset. I was grabbing the diaper rag and wiping him off and moving his hand and the Lord brought it back to mind and said, Aaron, you haven't quite killed that sin yet, have you?

Haven't quite learned what patience is. Haven't quite learned what loving your children is. Haven't quite learned how to control your anger yet. It's just a little thing. He spit up. Who cares? And the big run, like I say, my heat is trivial. I know that. But in the moment, it was really hot. And I could sit there all day and blame the circumstances. If my son was just sleeping through the night, I wouldn't have gotten angry with him. And so we need to get him sleeping through the night again. And we do. But that's not the problem. That wasn't why I got mad. Ted Tripp says, that's when you got mad. You got mad because you weren't asleep in your warm bed when you wanted to be. You got mad because your kingdom wasn't coming. Your will wasn't being done, Aaron, on earth like you want it to be.

And so I've got to learn to set aside what I want and understand that that's what God wanted for me in the middle of the night on Friday and early Saturday morning. He's teaching me something through that.

Not what I wanted, but it's what he wanted for me. And so I can't just blame the circumstance. I've got to get at the root of it, that what I want is more important than what God wants.

[8:19] That's not to minimize the difficulty of the situations we each face, the suffering we endure. Heat is real. And I hope taking time to talk about the heat earlier in this class shows that we take it seriously. It is the occasion for our sinful responses, but it is not the cause.

And we're teaching through this material in part so that you can be more aware that in certain situations, in certain heat, you know that you're going to be prone to sin. You look back at the pattern of your life and you see that's what happens. We want you to be aware of that, to acknowledge that, but also to be aware of the power that you have in you in Christ to deliver you from those tendencies. Another quote on your handout. The Bible's central message is that God did not gloss over suffering. He takes our heat seriously. But took costly measures to end it. He sent us a Redeemer, His Son Jesus Christ, who suffered alongside us to give us hope, meaning, and endurance amid life struggles. But Jesus is more than the great empathizer.

We must never minimize suffering, ours or anyone else's. Nevertheless, we must make the important distinction between the occasion for sin and the ultimate cause of sin. This will determine what you think the solution to your problem will be. It will also determine who will receive glory. You or Christ? If your problem is ultimately outside you, Christ is not needed. You see, if the diagnosis is made that the circumstances are the problem here, then I can fix that. I can do it on my own, or

maybe with the help of a friend. I can get my son sleeping through the night again, I hope. We can fix that circumstance. But if my problem is a wicked heart, then I can't change that on my own. I need the power of Christ. And so if I look at my problems, and I can fix that, and I fix that, and then all the glory goes to me. Look at how I got my temper under control. Look at how I got this area of my life where I was sitting under control. And it doesn't go to Christ, who's really the only one that can change us from the inside out. Who's the only one that can change the heart. Can the leopard change his spots? Can the Ethiopian change his skin? Then neither can you who are accustomed to doing evil do good. You can't change your heart. Only God can. And so when you understand that it goes all the way to the heart, then only God can save you. If our hearts are always the ultimate cause of our responses and where the true spiritual battle is, then it's only the power of Christ that can change me. Now there's times when we must address the circumstances. People need comfort in the midst of the heat, the suffering that they face. We must show compassion. We must give comfort even as Jesus did. But we can't leave it at that level. We must get underneath. Jesus didn't just heal people from their diseases and make their circumstances better. He forgave their sins. And we don't have the power to forgive sins, but we can look to Christ for that forgiveness and to deal with our hearts.

So what is your biggest problem then? Your biggest problem with thorny behavior? Well, it's you. You are your own biggest problem. And that might hurt to hear. We don't want to admit that. It strikes against our pride and our self-righteousness. It's very unpopular in a day of positive thinking and self-esteem being all important. But your struggle with thorny behavior starts in your thorny heart. Your primary problem isn't psychological, social, historical, physical. Those things all may play a role. Your primary problem is spiritual. And I think we see that in the Ten Commandments. And our authors helpfully pointed this out to me. I hadn't thought of it quite in these terms before. You might not expect to look at the summary of God's law when we're talking about dealing with the heart. Say, you want to talk about outward behavior? Let's talk about the law. Well, let's talk about the law with respect to the heart for a moment. Notice it with me. Deuteronomy 5. We'll begin in verse 6.

I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His name. Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy as the Lord your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you nor your son or daughter, nor your man-servant or maidservant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your maidservant, man-servant and maidservant may rest as you do. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore, the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day. Honor your father and your mother as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. You shall not set your desire on your neighbor's house or land, his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

[14 : 11] What does that have to do with our heart? Well, the first three commandments have to do with who we worship. And that must be God. And it must be only God. And in the way he says. And it must not be idols. And we must honor his name. Those are summarized in the next chapter in Deuteronomy 6, 4 and 5.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. They're about loving God. They're about worshiping God.

And our authors say, and they're right, if you break commands 1 through 3, you will break commands 4 through 10. Your thorny, sinful responses to life grow out of a heart that is defected to worship something else.

Saturday morning early, my heart was worshiping my own creature comforts. What I wanted rather than God, who knew what was best for me and why he wanted me up for whatever in the morning that day.

I was worshiping not God at that moment, but what I wanted. Me. And so if we get 1 through 3 of the commandments wrong, we're worshiping the wrong thing, then we'll get the rest of them wrong. [15:28] Interesting that God's greatest concern for the Israelites, as they're about to enter the promised land, he's reminding them of the laws. They stand on the banks of the Jordan River, ready to actually go in and take the promised land this time.

His greatest concern isn't for their physical circumstances. And they've dealt with a lot of stuff, their physical needs. They're going into a land full of enemies that they're going to have to destroy. They've been suffering. But his primary concern, as he gives the law to them, isn't that. It's who they worship. It's about their hearts. Because he knows that as they go into the land, there's going to be things that will tempt them to turn astray, to worship other gods. That's what he's most concerned with. That's what's first in the law.

So help me make the connection between violating commands 1 through 3 and how that impacts our breaking commands 4 through 10. Pick any of 4 through 10 and show how breaking 1 through 3 influences that. Help me make that connection this morning.

Let me give you one. There. Go ahead. Exactly. Excellent. We're in front, so we use our words to advance our cause, what we want, to make us look good, to make others look bad, instead of using our words to honor God. Excellent. Good. Who else can make a connection between one of the commandments, one of the last seven in the first three?

[17:06] Ed? The 10th commandment, you shall not covet, but we're referring back to the first and the second, where you have no other gods, and then also making them right.

Okay. Excellent. We've set something else up in our heart that's so important that we can't live without it. And if that's not God, then we're coveting, and we're breaking the first three commandments. Good.

Who else? Dennis? Dennis? Dennis? Dennis? Dennis?

Dennis? Dennis? Dennis? Hmm. Hmm. Hmm. Good. Excellent.

And it's also about sexual purity, a high standard that God calls us to. And if our number one goal isn't pursuing what God wants, His pleasure, then we'll go and pursue our pleasure.

[18:05] And yeah, we've broken a vow, those of us that are married. Good. Roger. Hmm. Hmm. Exactly.

It's God that institutes those authorities. We rebel against them, we rebel against Him. Our authors say when commands one through three are broken, my will and honor become primary. Instead of honoring father and mother, honoring God, honoring other authorities.

If we don't take worshiping God seriously, then are we really going to be serious about giving Him an entire day for rest and worship? We're not going to care about the fourth commandment if we're not serious about one through three.

And so we could go with the other commandments. We won't take time to finish them all. But you see, there's a connection. If you're not worshiping God, then you're not going to care about His law, about what He says to do.

And you're going to live however you want instead of living to honor Him. We get in trouble, the authors write, when we wrap our hearts around something other than the living God and we believe the lie that without it, life is meaningless.

[19:18] The opposite is true. Life without God is meaningless. And if we put anything else in that place of God, then our life will be a mess and we'll turn away from the God who made us.

Paul summarizes it very well for us. 2 Timothy 3, verses 2-4. People will be lovers of themselves. Lovers of money. Boastful. Proud. Abusive.

Disobedient to their parents. Ungrateful. Unholy. Without love. Unforgiving. Slandering. Without self-control. Brutal. Not lovers of the good. Treacherous. Rash. Conceited.

Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Here he says, if you're not a lover of God, then you will be a lover of pleasure, money, self, and you'll do all of these other wicked behaviors.

All of this thorny behavior will show itself if you're not loving God, if you're not worshiping Him. If you get that wrong, you get the rest of it wrong. And so are you struggling with some thorny behavior?

[20:18] Don't just look at the behavior. Look at that because you need to deal with it. You need to kill it. It needs to be put to death. But go deeper than that. Ask yourself about your relationship with God. Am I loving God like I should be?

Am I worshiping Him? Is He the focus of what I want and what I long for? Are you delighting to worship Him publicly and privately? Is it a joy for you to be with God's people and to sing His praise together?

On the day that He's given us, does it delight you to give Him a day to honor His name? Are you delighted to privately worship God? To get up each morning and to know that He speaks to us in His Word?

To listen to Him? And to pray to Him? And to know not only does He speak to us, He listens to us? Does that thrill your heart? Are you worshiping God? Do you love Him like that? Or is your heart cold?

Is it growing cold when you come to worship? You don't see the big deal anymore. Other things are more important to you than God and His worship. When you're worshiping God, all you can think about is the football game that's going to be on this afternoon.

[21:20] You're thinking about the great time that you had last night. It doesn't bother you when people use God's name in vain like it once did. If those things are true, you're not delighting in worshiping God and loving Him.

Other things are becoming more important than you're going to be struggling with thorns in your life. So we need to probe and go much deeper than just the outward manifestations of our sin and the breaking of the law.

We need to go back to the source of the problem. And pray that God would once again warm your heart. That He would make you love Him more. That He would fill your heart. He's shown us His great love.

Love that we can't even fathom or understand or measure. Pray that He would give you just even a measure of that love and return to Him. That you might love Him and therefore love the law that He gives and love to keep it and love to honor Him.

Pray that the fire of those desires would be stoked in your heart and dump water on whatever is firing your desires that's not God. That's taking your focus away from Him.

[22:28] And so our biggest problem is right in our own hearts. And the things that become more important to us than God aren't always bad things.

It's not always blatant to us. Obviously clear that this is something wicked. It can be something good. Even a gift that God gives us can become more important than the God who gives it. And those things can become idols to us. Romans 1.25 is on your handout. And it says, They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator who is praised forever.

Amen. So is the solution to get rid of the created things? No. The problem isn't with the things that God made. They're good. 1 Timothy 4.4 For everything God created is good and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.

The problem is our desire for the created things becoming greater than our desire for God. It's very subtle. It's deceptive. We have good desires. We want obedient children.

[23:31] We want a successful career. We want to find a godly spouse. But we can almost imperceptibly allow those things to become so important that if we don't have them, it sucks our joy away.

It makes us begin to doubt God and His goodness. We don't delight in Him like we once did. And we find that those things have become ultimate, more important to us than God Himself. Our authors say, created things are not sinful in themselves.

They become idols when we exalt them to the place only God should occupy. So what examples are there of created things that are good and right for us to enjoy, but that we put as ultimate things in place of God sometimes?

I mentioned one, we want obedient children. That's a good thing, but it can become so important. Our authors give us an example. A father wants his child to honor and obey Him so that when he grows up, he will not be hostile towards those in authority.

This is a good desire and something God commands. But when this desire for respectful children becomes this father's ultimate goal, it becomes his functional God. It leads him to manipulate his

son to get him to obey.

[24:45] The father may become very controlling, exploding in anger when the child steps out of line. He may become depressed by any failure in his son. Or self-righteous, proud and condescending toward parents whose children are less obedient.

So it's a good thing. We want our children to be obedient, respectful. But if it gets to be that important, it's causing us to sin and it's become an idol. What are some other good things that can become too important to us?

Steve? Steve? I think it's one that probably he's kind of relaxing. Hmm. Recreation is good. Comfort is good.

God has made a world where we find ease. At times it's a place where we work as well. But if that becomes too important, then yeah, good. What else? Bob?

Books. We can become bookolators. And yeah. Yeah. Books are good. This book is good.

[25:51] But if I begin to think this is more important in my books than God, yeah, I've missed it. What else? What?

Bob? Clothes. Clothes. Clothes are a good thing. A necessary thing since the fall.

But yeah, they can become way too important to us. Way too important. Fitness. God gave us our bodies. He wants us to take care of them.

You know, you can become consumed with that to where your body is more important than God. You don't care anymore that it's a temple of the Holy Spirit. It's a temple of me. And look at this specimen. Well, find somebody else to find a specimen of physical fitness.

But yeah, you want people to notice that. And you've become your God. Or money. Or food. Or family. Family's good.

[26:56] I love family. But if it replaces God, then it's become an idol. And so when we don't get the created good things that have become so important to us, we begin to question Him doubting His goodness.

Whether He really has our best interests in heart. We think He doesn't really want us to enjoy life. And as we question God at this point, we begin to question whether His commands are really for our good and for our blessing.

It becomes harder to love Him and harder to worship Him and harder to obey Him. And the thorns begin to take over. And all because we took a good gift and made it ultimate. Made it the most important thing.

This quote is on your handout after the Romans 12:5 passage. The worship of these God replacements leads to thorny attitudes, thoughts, emotions, and actions.

Blessings have usurped the giver of those blessings. Creation has usurped the Creator. When this happens, sinful responses will inevitably emerge in a person's life. Turn over with me to James 4.

[28:02] You've heard this preached on. We should have some recollection of it. James 4. I want to see briefly how the thorns, the presenting behavior, the presenting sin, can reveal something of the sinfulness that's in our hearts.

Something of the idolatry in our hearts. James 4. We'll read verses 1-10. What causes fights and quarrels among you?

Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something, but you don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight.

You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive because you ask with wrong motives. Then you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God.

Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit He caused to live in us envies intensely, but He gives us more grace?

[29:11] That is why Scripture says God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves then to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you.

Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn, and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord and He will lift you up.

See the problem, there's a conflict, an argument. That's the presenting behavior. That's the sin. So for many people, it's stop arguing.

Or they say, what are you arguing about? You notice James never says what we're arguing about. It doesn't matter if you're arguing about who had the toy first or who spent too long in the bathroom or which spouse is right or which team has the better quarterback.

He doesn't tell us. Now, we run and say, what were you arguing about? And then we work from that point. Instead of starting, and that may get us, if that gets you to the desires in your heart, that's good.

[30 : 13] But don't just stop at what you're arguing about. James never talks about it. He goes right to the heart. But desires are not being met so people lash out in an attempt to satisfy those desires.

That's what happens when something becomes so important to you that you are willing to hurt somebody else to get it. You're willing to hurt them with your words, with your actions, physically hurt them maybe.

When something has become... If something gets that important to you, just in the middle of your next argument, you take a step back. If you, by God's grace, say, hold on, what are we doing?

Take a step back and say, what has become so important to me that it's worth hurting the relationship with my spouse over? There's nothing that's worth that. What's so important to me that I'm ready to deck my brother, to tackle him over?

It's not worth it. What desire in my heart has taken that significant of a place? It happens when we abandon our first love, love God and pursue a false lover, our own desires.

[31 : 21] And this is on your handout here. We've finally gotten to the root of things. We're no longer floating on the surface. God is committed to reclaiming our hearts through the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

When we see our thorns, they help us detect our idols, our specific God replacements, and our ruling desires. We see where our hearts need transformation and we are led to hunger and thirst for grace.

And you see, that's where James goes. He gives us more grace. He goes to the grace of God and reminds us that it comes to the humble. And so the answer is an anger management class.

It's being humble enough to submit your desires to God. Submit yourself to God. To resist the devil. You know he's going to tempt you. You know he's going to hang those desires before you resist that.

By God's grace. Draw near to God. What is that? That's worship. That's love. Draw near to Him. That's the answer to your problem with arguing. You need to be a worshiper of God.

[32 : 17] Wash your hands. You see, your behavior does need to change. You've got to stop arguing. Wash your hands, but don't do it without also purifying your heart. You've got to get at the desire.

James gives it all to us right here in ten verses. The outward behavior, it points to the sinful desires underneath and then what we do about it. We draw near to God. Wash our hands and purify our heart.

Our authors say it's all by grace, but that does not mean we are passive. Christian growth is warfare. It is worth doing the hard work of discovering what leads us away from this glorious God. And it's not always easy to unearth what desire is lying behind your outward behavior. It takes work. It takes effort. You've got to think about it. And to help us do that, we have these x-ray questions in number three.

That may sound silly, but I think it's a very helpful thing. Our authors give us thirty-four x-ray questions and they were developed first by David Powlison. Powlison's the guy that taught the class, the dynamics of biblical change that this book is based on.

[33 : 23] Both of these guys took David Powlison's class and they said, the world needs us and they wrote it into a book. Well, Powlison developed these, he had thirty-five and our authors give us thirty-four, but thirty-five, what he calls x-ray questions.

Questions to help us determine the thorny heart that lies behind our thorny behavior. And our authors say, repentance is not true repentance unless it is specific and intelligent.

We don't sin in the abstract, we sin in concrete, particular ways. Since that is true, we need to take an honest look at our lives, both heart and behavior. And these questions will help you take an honest look at your heart so you can repent specifically of specific idols and desires that you have

set up in place of God instead of saying, Lord, I want the wrong things, help me to want you more than the wrong things.

Don't be generic, wrong things. He is specific and these questions will help you pinpoint things that you have come to worship in place of God. Now, I couldn't list all of the thirty-some questions here. It exceeds what's permitted under the permission of quoting in the book. I've included a few to whet your appetite and I've actually taken them from David Pallison. I think his version of them is more helpful than Lane and Tripp, although Lane and Tripp are good.

[34 : 39] So if you want all thirty-four questions, you can find them in this book. I think there's a couple more on the book rack still. You can also find them in this book. This is David Pallison, *Seen with New Eyes*.

This is available to borrow to the first person to catch me after Sunday school. And you can also find them at the website that's listed on your handout.

And Pallison's version really is helpful because he knows what he was thinking when he wrote the question and his explanations that follow the questions are really helpful in unearthing what's in your heart. But here's just a few examples.

His fifth one is, if you go online and just Google Pallison x-ray questions, you'll be able to find it. But question five, to accurately diagnose so that we can accurately treat our problem with sin.

What do you fear? What do you not want? What do you tend to worry about? If I want to avoid something at all cost, loss of reputation, loss of control, poverty, ill health, rejection, etc., then I'm ruled by a lustful fear.

[35 : 44] This is the flip side of sinful desire. A lot of people say, I want this. I can't live without, and you fill in the blank. This is the opposite. I can't live with whatever it is.

What do you fear? I can't live with sickness. You would get afraid of being sick. I don't like to be sick. And I think this might be approaching one of my idols.

I value my health. But people can be paralyzed by that. I can't live with being sick. And so they'll do whatever it takes to maintain their health to the extent that it's sinful.

That's more important than God. That's their idol. Question number ten. Where do you find refuge, safety, comfort, escape, pleasure, security? This is the question that digs out your false trusts, your escapisms that substitute for the Lord.

When you're in trouble and you're fearful, where do you go for comfort instead of going to the Lord? And identify those things and see what has become greater security for you than God Himself.

[36 : 50] And He goes on, many addictive behaviors are helpfully addressed by this question. They often arise in the context of life's troubles and pressures and function as false refuges. So where is it that you go?

Where do you find your little comfort area when you're feeling pressure from all around? A lot of people, it's food or this or that and those things become so important. I think this is an interesting question.

It's the fourteenth one. Who are your role models? What kind of person do you think or ought, do you think you ought to be or want to be? Your idol or hero reveals you.

Such persons embody the image towards which you aspire. I wish I had that person's talent, that person's athletic ability, that person's look.

Who is it that you look up to, that you admire, that you respect? And maybe something about that person will reveal something in your own heart that's sinful that you want. Maybe it will reveal something good.

[37 : 51] You've got the right kind of role model. You're looking up to someone godly and you want to be humble and holy like they are. Thank the Lord, but sometimes they reveal something else. Number fifteen, on your deathbed, what would sell up your life as worthwhile?

What gives your life meaning? You think about, when I look back on my life, I want to be able to say this. I want to have children that are happily married and that have their own children that are successful and that are content and all of these things.

I want to have an inheritance to leave to them. You look back. Or you imagine looking back. And what do you really want out of this life? And that will show you what you're living for right now. You go to the end and look back.

He says, this is Ecclesiastes' question. The book, Ecclesiastes, Ecclesiastes examines scores of options and finds all but one option ultimately futile. I think this is a huge one.

Then there's other questions. What do you pray for? How do you spend your time? What do you talk about? Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. So you want to know what's in your heart? See what you talk about.

[39 : 00] 30 something questions to help us get at the root so we rightly diagnose the problem. So we don't just stop at the surface level of behavior but that we get at the heart.

And our authors write this down under number four. Spiritual awareness is a blessing. Through it we can experience change. Use these questions to turn away from idols and turn to the mercy and power of Christ.

As you do, don't forget that you are married to Christ. His assets are your assets. Your sin has been dealt with at the cross and you don't have to be afraid to take a good look at yourself. I love that. Whatever I find when I go digging with these x-ray questions, God already knows about and He's already punished it at the cross so don't be afraid to do a little digging. He wants you to become more like His Savior.

He wants you to go and to see what's in your heart and then He wants you to go to the cross and He wants you to see Jesus there who is the answer. The one who died to forgive your sins and the one who lives to give you power to conquer those sins.

[40 : 02] He doesn't just free us from the guilt and punishment of sin. He frees us from the power of it. We're not enslaved to it anymore so we should be every day more and more throwing off that sin that still entangles us and pressing on towards the goal of the upward call of God in Christ.

So if you really want to change you've got to get behind the outward behavior. Deal with the heart. Use these questions. Get alone with God and His Word and see what He has to say about what you're wanting, what you're worshiping more than Him.

Maybe a couple of discouraging weeks. Looking at our thorny behavior and our thorny hearts. I look at that and I don't like what I see. But the next two chapters are on the cross.

And just a little flavor of it at the end there, we have Christ, but I want to give us a fuller picture of it. We're not going to do it next week, I won't be here, Lord willing, but the first week in January will come and we'll see the glory of Christ.

That we're not left with this thorny behavior, this thorny heart, to deal with it on our own. If we were, we wouldn't be able to deal with it. Or if we were, we'd just sort of deal with the externals and never get at the heart.

[41 : 12] No, that's not what we're left to. We've got Christ. And Lord willing, in the weeks to come we'll see Him as we continue through the book. Well, may God help us then to unearth some of our sinful thoughts and desires and help us to change.

We're dismissed.