

mercy
MULTIPLIED

presents



Keys to
FREEDOM

Study Guide

An eight part interactive discipleship study

Live Free, Stay Free 

Mercy[™]
MULTIPLIED

Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Acknowledgments | 5 |
| About this Study | 7 |
| Introduction by Nancy Alcorn | 9 |
| Setting the Stage | 13 |
| Key 1 - <i>Committing and Connecting to Christ</i> | 27 |
| Key 2 - <i>Renewing Your Mind</i> | 43 |
| Key 3 - <i>Healing Life's Hurts</i> | 57 |
| Key 4 - <i>Choosing to Forgive</i> | 71 |
| Key 5 - <i>Breaking Generational Patterns</i> | 85 |
| Key 6 - <i>Choosing Freedom Over Oppression</i> | 99 |
| Key 7 - <i>Maintaining Lifelong Freedom</i> | 113 |
| Conclusion | 127 |
| Commitment to Freedom | 129 |
| Appendix A: <i>"Who I Am In Christ"</i> | 131 |
| Appendix B: <i>Faulty Beliefs and Freedom Facts</i> | 133 |
| Appendix C: <i>Daily Declarations</i> | 139 |

Setting the Stage

Day 1: *Getting to the Root*

Cutting off the branches won't change the fruit that grows.

One of the easiest ways to describe the approach we are going to take throughout this study is to depict our lives by using the analogy of a tree. Imagine your life as a tree with branches, a thick tree trunk and a root system underground, feeding and sustaining the tree.

The branches of this tree represent our BEHAVIORS – the “above-ground” visible aspects of who we are and how we behave. These are the things that become clear when you get to know a person well, or in some cases, the “branches” are so obvious that they can be spotted almost immediately. The branches on our tree can be healthy or unhealthy, depending on the health of our root systems. Today we will focus primarily on the unhealthy factors in our lives, as those are the things that we need to address in order to overcome.

Some very common unhealthy branches (behaviors) that can grow on the tree of our life can include things like:

- Inability to commit to relationships, a church, job, etc.
- Lack of healthy boundaries
- People-pleasing behaviors (struggling with saying no and finding self-worth through acceptance of others)
- Promiscuity
- Putting others down, comparison and feeling threatened by others' success
- Bullish/aggressive/intimidating behaviors
- Manipulation (actions that position one to stay in control of others and situations)
- Independence and self-sufficiency
- Emotional instability (either disconnected or too connected to emotions)

More serious “life-controlling” branches (behaviors) can include:

- Eating disorders
- Self-harm
- Depression
- Anxiety Disorders and Panic attacks (Insomnia, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder)
- Addictions (alcohol, drugs, pornography, social media, work, video games, etc.)

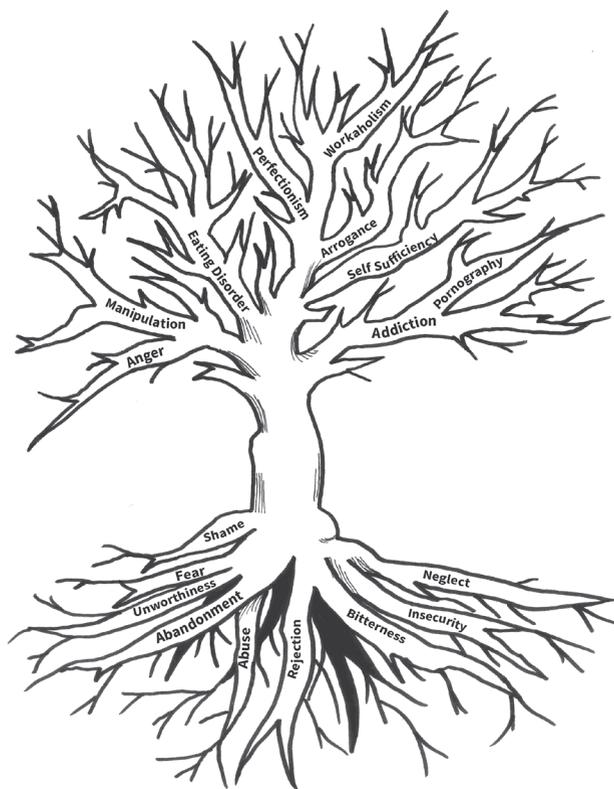
The tree trunk describes the BELIEF SYSTEM a person has developed over the course of their life. Our belief system is what sustains and upholds our behaviors. We act within the context of how we think and what we believe.

We act within the context of how we think and what we believe.

The roots of the tree feed both the tree trunk and the branches. These roots draw their power from the specific circumstances that affect us from childhood, such as divorce, the loss of a loved one, long term sickness, or any other mental, spiritual, sexual or physical trauma. Interestingly, while the branches that grow on people’s lives can vary tremendously from person to person, as we all have a variety of healthy and unhealthy branches, the types of roots that feed those branches tend to be fairly universal. Those roots then grow into a trunk – a belief system – and it’s our belief system that determines our behaviors.

The roots listed below are some examples of “the why behind the what” – the true causes of the issues in our lives. Many of us are affected by their presence, without even realizing their influence.

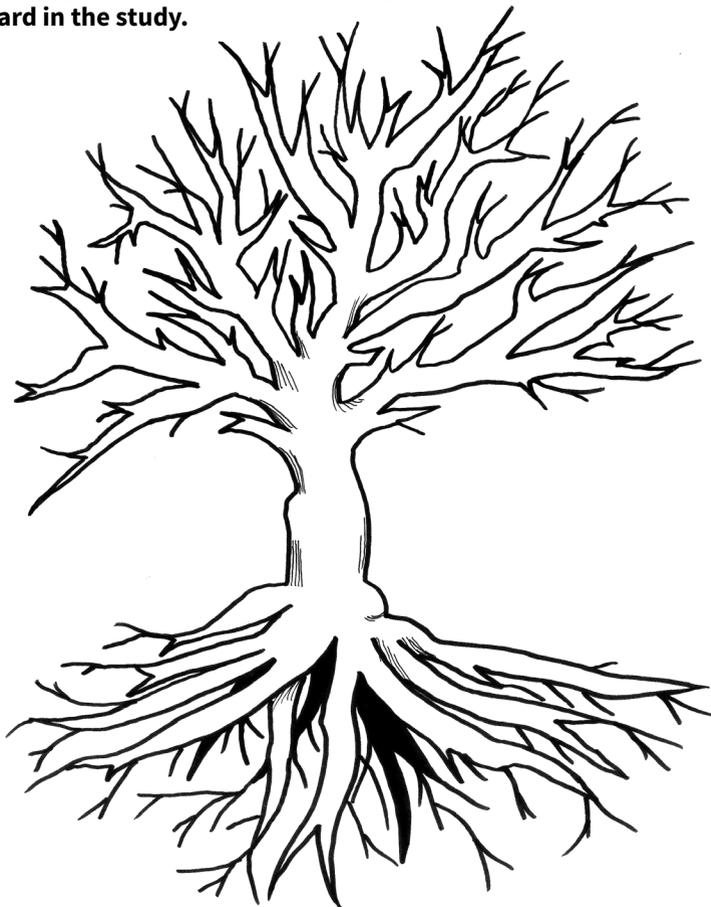
- Abandonment
- Rejection
- Abuse
- Unworthiness
- Shame
- Fear
- Guilt
- Insecurity
- Pride
- Bitterness



People typically focus their attention only on what they can see, so help is sought (and given) with the “cutting off” of unhealthy branches. In other words, behavior modification is the goal, and negative behaviors are often dealt with by behavior management and/or medication. This approach may appear successful because a branch can indeed be cut off and removed from the tree; however, unless the root structure is addressed, that same branch will grow back, either in the very same place or elsewhere on the same tree. That is true for the tree that stands in a garden as much as it is true for the tree that represents your life.

Though it may seem like destructive behavior is causing the most damage in your life, the challenge is not simply a behavioral issue; rather, the challenge we all face is the removal of fundamental “root” issues. These destructive roots are at the core of our destructive behaviors. Without dealing with the roots, the behavior can never truly be healed. In many cases, our “roots” are damaged by the behaviors of imperfect people and imperfect circumstances in our lives. The truth is that we need a perfect God to bring the revelation and healing that cannot come merely by focusing on the unhealthy branches.

Consider the branches and roots operating in your life today. Try to identify 2 or 3 branches and 2 or 3 roots, and write them on the tree below. If it’s difficult for you to identify these things in your life right now, don’t be discouraged. They will likely become clearer to you as we move forward in the study.



Now that you have identified some areas on your own tree, spend some time in prayer before you close your study time. Use the space below to ask the Lord to help you in the process of overcoming any areas that you have identified today.



Day 2: *The Roots Determine the Fruit*

Yesterday we spent some time discussing the tree analogy that we will use throughout this study and the importance of recognizing the roots in our lives. As we mentioned yesterday, this is not typically the way that people address their issues. The focus is usually on addressing the behaviors themselves – the “branches” – instead of addressing the roots.



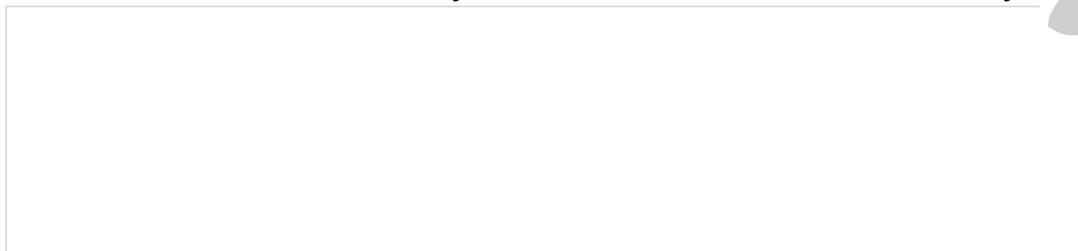
Write Matthew 12:33 in the space below.

This scripture says that a tree can be made either good or bad, and that either way, it is known by its fruit. The fruit that a tree produces cannot be affected by simply cutting off the branches. Making a tree healthy – making our lives whole, healed, and free – has to come from our roots.

If you choose to remain focused on the negative behaviors that you want to overcome instead of your past hurt, betrayal, trauma, disappointment or abuse, those roots will continue to shape your belief system, and you will continue to grow the branches of damaging and unhealthy behaviors.

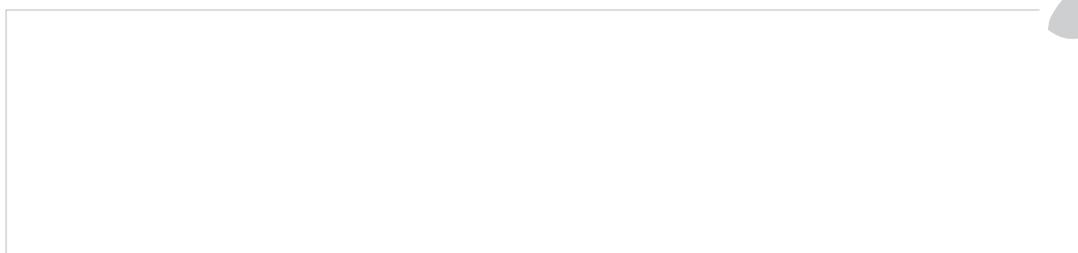
*Making a tree healthy –
making our lives whole,
healed and free –has to
come from our roots.*

What does Jeremiah 17:7-8 say about our roots? What do we need to be fed by?



Our roots need to be fed by God's Word, His presence, and His power. The roots of abandonment, rejection, fear, anger, shame, guilt, pride, bitterness, and unworthiness will never be able to produce healthy fruit. We may be able to cut off the branches by using all of our will power and resources, but a tree without branches produces no fruit at all. It is bare, lifeless, and will not fulfill its potential and purpose.

Write out the fruit that is described in Galatians 5:22-23.



Over the coming weeks, you will have the opportunity to examine your behaviors, to rebuild your belief system with what God's Word says about you, and to receive healing for the pain that enabled those roots to grow. We are going to teach you the tools for exposing the root causes of your behaviors through a partnership with the Holy Spirit. As you focus on the root system in your life instead of the branches, you will have the opportunity to truly overcome in a whole new way!