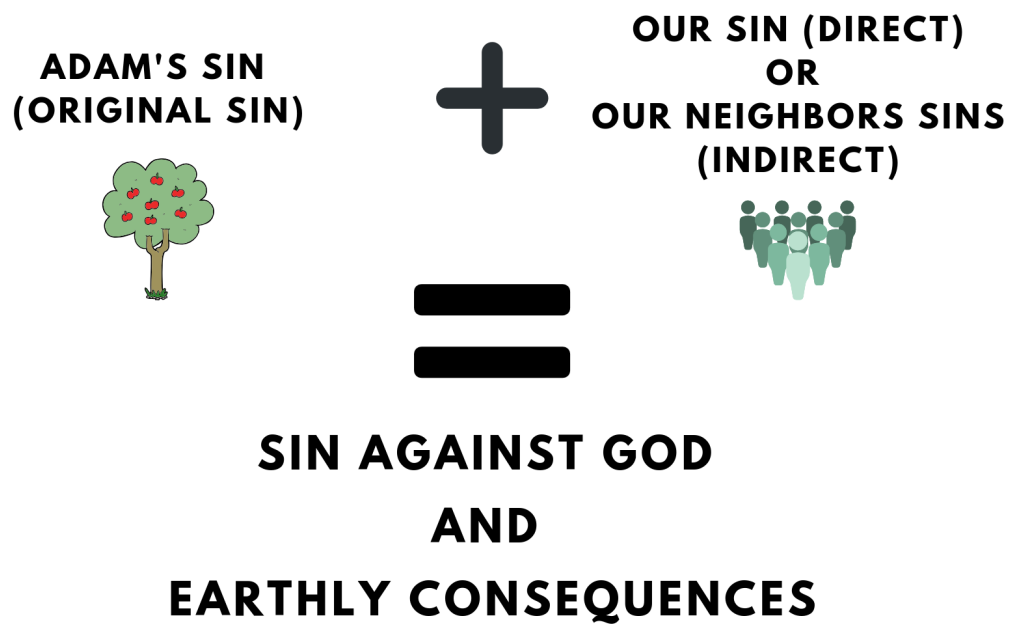


Caring for One Another (Because We Should): Session 1

Notes:

Caring for One Another (Getting to the Heart of the Matter): Session 2

Notes:



CONSEQUENCE OF SIN

ADAMS'S SIN

- DISEASE
- NATURAL
DISASTER/
THORN/
THISTLES

OUR SIN

- WE HURT
OTHERS
- WE HAVE
SUFFERINGS THAT
ARE OUR FAULT
- WE SIN AGAINST
OUR BODY

OUR NEIGHBORS

- WE ARE SINNED
AGAINST
- WE HAVE
SUFFERINGS THAT
IS NOT OUR FAULT

Notes:

A. Two Kinds of People: “Thorn Bushes” or “Fruit Trees”

Synonyms the Scripture uses: Fool vs. Wise; Ungodly vs. Godly; Flesh vs. Spirit; Goats vs. Sheep; etc.

1. _____ are 100% thorn bushes, with no good roots or fruits in God’s eyes.
⇒ This is why people need to be regenerated by God’s Holy Spirit. That is their greatest need.
2. _____ are hybrid trees, with mixed aspects of both good and bad roots and fruits.
⇒ This is why there is a need for Christian growth (progressive sanctification).

B. Two Dimensions of Each Person: “Fruit” and “Root”

The biblical concept of the “heart” (kardia) involves your **beliefs, motives, attitudes, desires, affections, decisions, will, etc.**

Conclusion: **There is an inseparable connection between your root and fruit.**

C. Examining Our Bad Roots (= Sinful “Heart Issues”)

Ultimately, *everyone is driven and ruled either by God or by someone or something else.*

The Bible describes sinful heart motives in many ways:

1. Ruling desires, demands, sinful wants, pleasures, cravings, lusts, expectations, needs (*Jas 1:13–15; 4:1–3; Eph 2:3; 4:22; Gal 5:16–17; 1 Pet 2:11; 4:2; 1 John 2:16–17; Exod 20:17; Rom 1:24–27; 7:7–11,14–25; 8:1–17*)

James 4:1–4 (context 3:13–4:12)

Warning Against Worldliness

[1] What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? [2] You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. [3] You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. [4] You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (ESV)

- 1) _____ **problem addressed:** (quarrels; fights; murder)

2) James' focus is the _____ of the sinful behavior. v.1

3) So, the cause of such sinful behavior according to James, is our _____
_____.

- ◇ Warring, encamped, entrenched desires (vv. 1,3; also 1:14–15 1 Peter 2:11; Gal 5:16–18)
- ◇ Ruling wants (v.2)
- ◇ Coveting (v.2)
- ◇ Wrong motives (v.3)

4) God offers his grace as the answer to the problem of our sinful desires (v.6)

James 4:6

[6] But he gives more grace. Therefore, it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

- Forgiving/pardoning grace
- Empowering/enabling/sustaining grace

5) God calls us to repent of those sinful desires in light of his grace (vv.7-8)

James 4:7-8

[7] Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. [8] Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (ESV)

When is a desire sinful?

1) When you desire something God forbids (Decalogue)

2) When you desire a good thing too much (inordinate, ruling, mastering)

How to know if your desire is inordinate or mastering?

- *Does it consume me?*
- *Do I sin in order to get it?*
- *Do I sin when I don't get it?*

How do you practically expose a sinful desire?

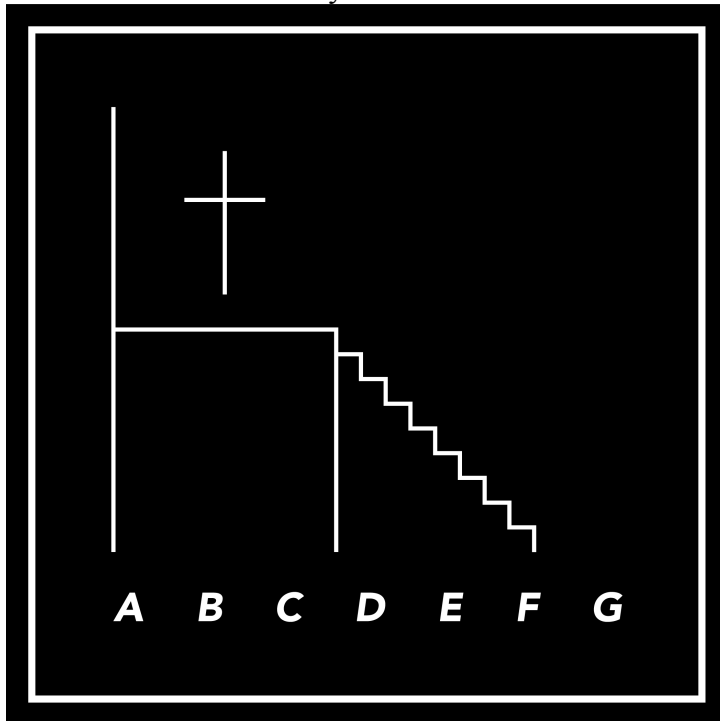
1) Consider contemporary cultural synonyms: “Wants, needs, rights, demands, expectations, entitlement”

2) When you are angry, depressed, afraid, anxious, in conflict, etc., ask yourself what is it right now that you are wanting so badly but not getting?

X-Ray Questions to help expose the heart¹

- “What I think I need or desperately want is ___? ___”
- “You must give me ___? ___ or I’ll be angry at you or cold toward you”
- “If only ___? ___ would change, I would be satisfied or content or joyful “

Throne-Staircase Chart by Robert D. Jones



¹ See also David Powlison, “X-ray Questions,” chap. 7 in *Seeing With New Eyes* (P&R, 2003).

Caring for One Another (Charting Christian Growth): Session 3

Notes:

1. _____. Your world, circumstances, experiences, etc.

This includes your past, present, and anticipated future.

(a) _____ = Hardships, trials, suffering, effects of sin & so called “cures”

- (1) GENERAL LIFE HARDSHIPS
- (2) BEING SINNED AGAINST
- (3) BODY PROBLEMS
- (4) SATAN
- (5) FALSE COUNSEL AND TEACHING

(b) _____ = Blessings; good things from God’s common grace.

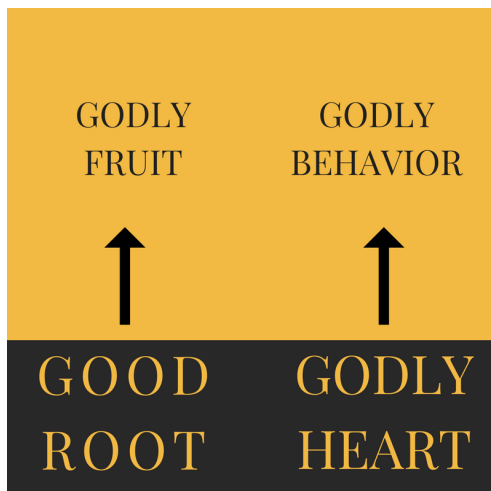
2. _____. Remember from last week there are two kinds of people (100% thorn bush and the hybrid trees). And each person has two levels (fruit and root)

(a) _____ = Ungodliness, foolishness, fleshly

* Bad Fruit – Sinful behavior: sinful words, actions and emotions

* Bad Root – Sinful heart: Heb 4:12 beliefs/motives (♥ idols/ruling desires); lies/lusts

(b) _____ = Godliness, wisdom, spiritual

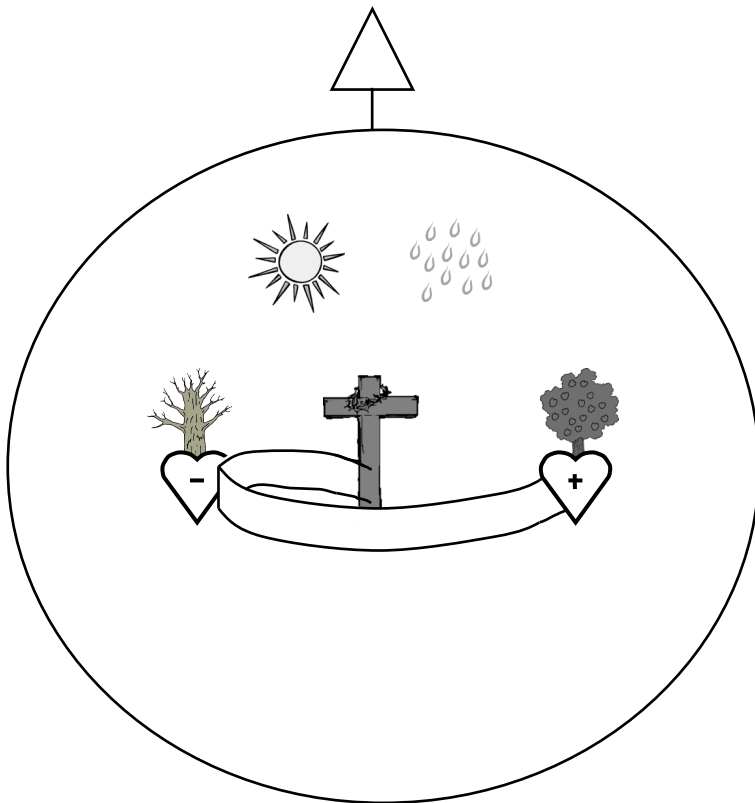


3. _____ : Who God is and what God provides in Christ.

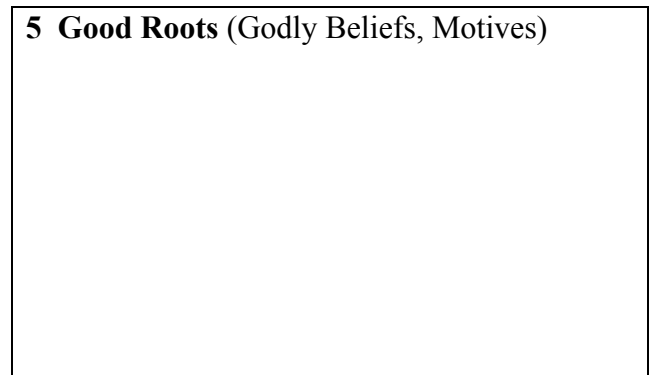
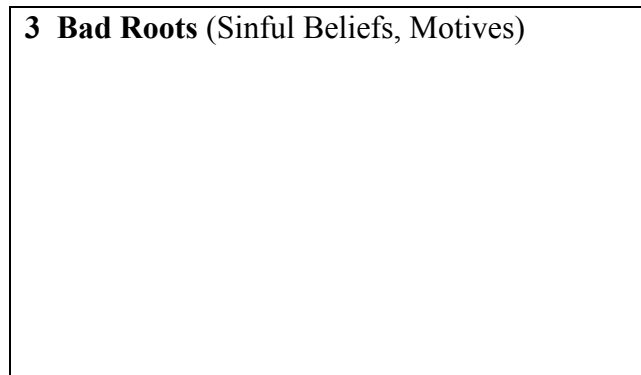
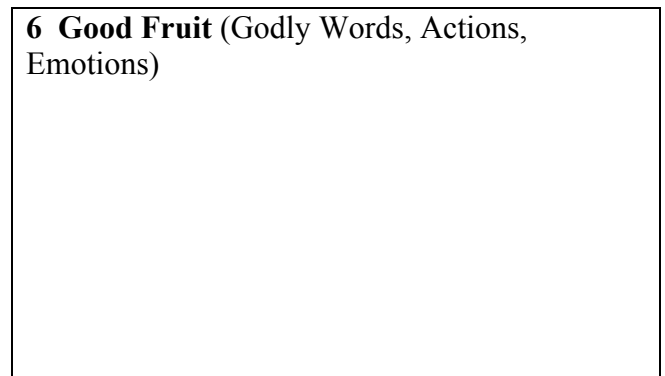
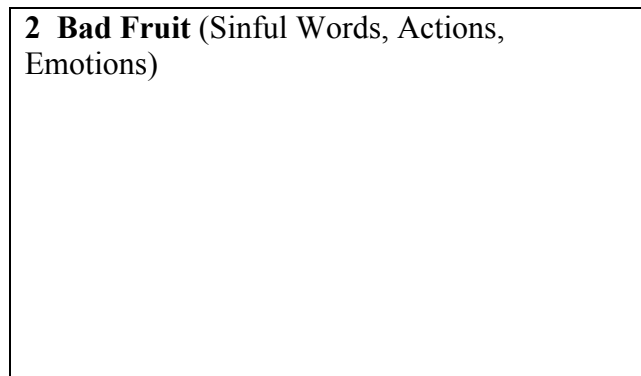
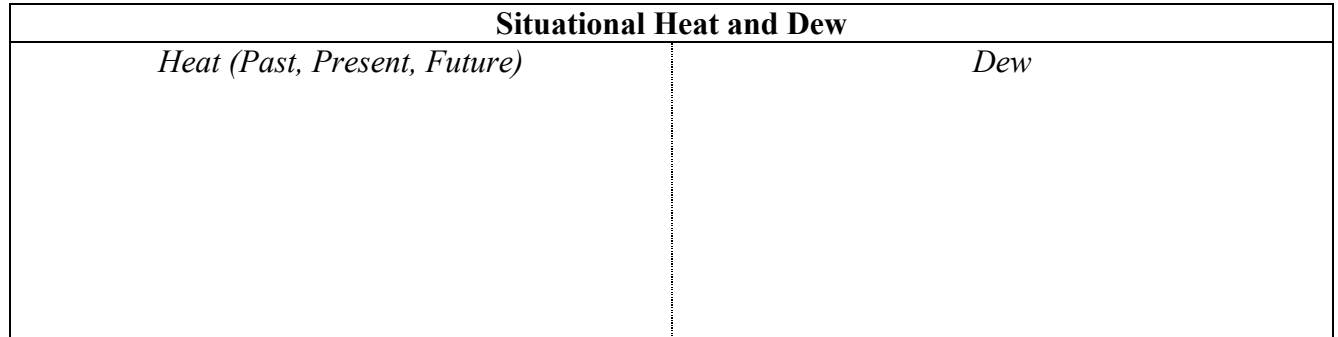
(a) _____ & _____ = The Sovereign, Wise, and Good God.

(b) _____ = God's provisions for us in Jesus Christ

(c) _____ = The Holy Spirit's application to you of God's provisions in Christ



Six Box Version of Three Tree Model



Repent



Faith

“Lois” Case Study²

“Lois” is a thirty-nine-year-old woman. She was married at nineteen because she was pregnant, and was divorced at twenty-two. She subsequently got her bachelor’s degree in elementary education, and has been teaching for twelve years in a local public school. She has found a lot of meaning and stability in her job - especially during rough times emotionally - and has received consistently good evaluations from supervisors. Lois had a number of short-term sexual relationships with men over the years, but never remarried. Her daughter, Renee, left home after high school, and is working in a beauty shop and living with her boyfriend. Lois’s relationship with Renee was basically positive over the years, and she looks to that, too, as a source of stability and “being forced to be responsible” over the years. [1]

At various times she drank heavily and used marijuana recreationally. She never considered herself an alcoholic, for she could stop at will when she got alarmed at what seemed to be excessive use. She is slightly pudgy, and is concerned over a recent ten-pound weight gain, which she attributes to “snacking to calm my nerves.” She dresses modestly and “middle of the road” – neither flashy nor dowdy – and uses makeup only occasionally and sparingly. “I try to keep myself looking reasonably well, but I’ve never been too obsessed with what I look like, like some women are.” She used to watch TV for a couple of hours every night, but now does that only two or three nights a week. [2]

She had gotten herself deeply in debt during her marriage and schooling. Despite occasional “binge” purchases that set her back, she has been occasionally free of debt for the last five years. She sees herself living “hand-to-mouth,” however, and not able to save. She worries that she has not been able to save in an IRA or for a house down-payment. She views her teacher’s pension as an important source of security. [3]

² Developed by David Powlison of the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation; used with permission. Brackets after each paragraph indicate the paragraph number for reference purposes.

At various times she struggled with depression, even seeking psychiatric help on one occasion. She frequently oscillated between fearful “mousiness” and angry rages with her husband and boyfriends. Feelings of anxiety, failure and self-hatred are “endemic and sometimes become epidemic.” The intensity and frequency of these reactions and feelings lessened somewhat as she “grew up” in her thirties. [4]

Her family upbringing was, in her words, “bizarre.” Her father was “brilliant, and he’d always tell us that he failed to get his Ph.D. only because he insulted his advisor who was a total jerk and deserved it. He was a believer in telling people exactly what he thought of them, which wasn’t too pleasant for me because he didn’t think too much of me.” Her father was an alcoholic who was constantly losing jobs and alienating people by his aggressive and “paranoid” ways. “I think I inherited some of his intelligence, for I always did well in school. I think I would have felt more hurt by him if I hadn’t seen him as a ‘crazy man’ even from when I was in elementary school. I usually tried to keep my distance.” Lois sees herself as a lot like her mother in personality – “only not so extreme” – in being prone to passivity, fear, anxiety, and only occasional anger. “I’m a pleaser and a follower, not an initiator, leader, or aggressor. I’m like her, but I was never close to her.” The family lived in 8 different towns during Lois’s school years. “I accidentally got pregnant and mourned in order to have an excuse to get out of the house. I never really had any friends, and I fell for the first person who was nice to me.” She had no formal religious upbringing. [5]

Her father is living 3000 miles away. “Since I became a Christian I’ve been able to forgive him, and start up a reasonably cordial relationship – I write or phone every few months, and have visited for a couple days on two occasions. He’s still a bit of a trial, and it would take a miracle for us to ever really be close. He’s his same old self, though each of his negative ways is less intense.” Lois’s mother had divorced him after the children left home, and she died ten years ago. “I grieved. I coped. I think I feel sadder and feel regrets more now that I’m a Christian, because we were never really close. She was too much wrapped up in her own problems.” [6]

Lois has a brother seven years older with whom she has never been close. “We each kind of tried to make the best of it, and were too far apart to ever be more than next-door neighbors who feel a kind of arm’s-length curiosity about the other. He’s had a couple divorces, but seems to be doing pretty well running his small business.” [7]

Four years ago she was converted to Christ through the testimony of a neighbor woman who had become a friend. The sexual immorality and substance abuse stopped immediately. The slow curve of improvement in negative feelings and actions – anger, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, fearfulness, emotional volatility – took a rather marked positive jump, although these things still plague her. The model of other Christian women has helped her to grow both

personally and in having some confidence to think about getting involved with a man again— “but this time in the right way, which I didn’t know anything about before.” She wants to serve the Lord with her gifts, and has gotten active in teaching Sunday School and attending a few courses in the church’s weekly Bible school. She has three Christian women she feels close to, all of whom are married. One of the couples hosts a weekly Bible study and fellowship group that Lois attends regularly. “It’s a place where people are honest and pray for one another in a way that’s not just surface-y.” [8]

She has sought counseling from you. Her presenting problem is two-fold: “I’m depressed, afraid, and panicky in my own heart. I know that Jesus died for my sins, but sometimes I just don’t feel it and feel that God must hate me. And things get angry, tense, and depressing between me and Willie. I just react and either see red or see blue!” She has been dating Willie for about eight months. He is a Christian man her age, and was never married. He has been a Christian since his teens, and is both knowledgeable in the Bible and committed to diaconal ministry. He is a high school graduate, and works as a foreman in a factory. [9]

They met at the Bible study. They both found it easy to talk with one another – until recently. They have the same basic goals for lifestyle and ministry, and have felt a real “click.” They would like to marry, and their mutual friends think it is a natural. But their relationship is having problems. “He’s the one, I know it, but why am I getting so uptight?” She has become very picky at his shortcomings, and both of them hate that. They have had arguments, which they have not been able to solve, so trust has been diminishing. There are “taboo topics” which they can’t approach without tensions: setting a date for the marriage; he really hopes to have children and she is cold to the idea; her depression or pickiness and his grumpiness, etc. Lois has a terror of being abandoned and rejected, “of failing for the umpteenth time, and this time as a Christian.” There is no sexual impropriety in their relationship, for both are very careful and circumspect. [10]

They have prayed, read the Bible and Christian books, attended several seminars and retreats, and sought the advice and prayers of friends, without being able to lick either the personal or relationship problems. “Maybe this sounds contradictory, but my devotional life has actually gotten more regular and more meaningful since we’ve been having problems. I always had trouble being consistent, and I actually think I feel closer to the Lord than I did a year ago.” Willie does not want to seek counseling at this time. But Lois says, ‘That’s OK, because I really think that a lot of the problem is me, not us, and if I can change it will make a big difference. I’ve tried to do the right things, and I think I’ve improved, but I still get angry and negative as a knee-jerk reaction. Then I feel so guilty. I always ask his forgiveness after, because the Lord convicts me instantly. Willie forgives me. But I wallow around being depressed. And then I hurt him again, or he hurts me. I can tell he’s got his guard up and is confused about whether I love

him or not and whether he can trust me. Believe it or not, I'm getting better. I don't get so panicky when he's angry at me, and I more easily think of loving things to do for him. But I just still feel stuck. Maybe it's that I'm not moving fast enough. He can be grumpy at me and I act as if it's the end of the world. Oh, one other thing you ought to know is that I get extra touchy and negative when I'm overtired or around the time of my period. I'm on a committee at the school involved in redesigning the curriculum, and that has meant a lot of extra meetings and work which, on top of everything else, has had me pretty worn out." [11]

Pick Lois up on a second or third session. She has been very open and trusting, and has freely given you the preceding sketch of her life. She is willing to examine her own life in God's light. She basically loves Jesus. She is now asking, "Why do I do these things? Why am I this way? How can I change? I feel like I know the right answers, and I am thankful the movement I have made, but something isn't clicking for me. Can you understand what I'm experiencing and asking? Can you help me? Where do I go from here? I want to become a different kind of person who can really make this relationship with Willie work." [12]

For Further Study and Development

Websites:

ccef.org

biblicalcounseling.com

ibcd.org

Journals:

<https://www.ccef.org/journal-of-biblical-counseling>

Free Issue Specific Lectures:

<http://ibcd.org/resources/>

Books on Common Issues:**Anxiety and Depression:**

Christians Get Depressed Too by David Murray

Depression A Stubborn Darkness: Light for the Path by Ed Welch

Zoe's Hiding Place: When You Are Anxious by David Powlison (book for kids)

On Medication:

Prescriptions and Descriptions by Mike Emlet

Anger:

Uprooting Anger by Robert D. Jones

Conflict:

Pursuing Peace: A Christian's Guide to How to Handle Conflict by Robert D. Jones

Sexual Sin:

Finally Free by Heath Lambert

Sexual Detox by Tim Challies

What Does the Bible Really Teach About Homosexuality by Kevin Deyoung

Singleness:

Redeeming Singleness by Barry Danylak

Marriage:

When Sinners Say I Do by Dave Harvey

Parenting:

Parenting by God's Promises by Joel Beeke (watch out for his view of the covenant ;))