

Detect and Remove Root Problems

A Teaching on Maintaining a Healthy Thought Life

“4 Children 8 Objects Part 6 Detect and Remove Root Problems”

This teaching idea originally came from working with children, but the principles are applicable to **every believer in Christ**.

The goal is to effectively address issues; it is crucial to identify and eliminate the underlying **root cause**.

By focusing on the real problem, we can prevent future complications and enhance our problem-solving skills found in God’s word-the Bible. This approach not only resolves the current issue but also mitigates the risk of recurrence.

Introduction: Don't Just Treat the Fruit

When a tree produces bad fruit, cutting off the fruit does not solve the problem. If the root remains, the tree can continue producing the same kind of fruit.

The same principle can apply spiritually.

We can spend enormous amounts of time dealing with the outward manifestation of a problem while never addressing what is producing it.

The question is not merely: “What am I dealing with?”

The deeper question is:

“What is the root producing this?”

The purpose of this teaching is twofold:

1. **Detect and remove the root—the real problem—to prevent unnecessary trouble.**
2. **Seek everlasting methods rather than temporary methods.**

1. DEVELOP YOUR SPIRITUAL RADAR

The teaching identifies four areas that can help us detect and remove root problems:

1. Our Will

Our determination, motivation, drive, and willingness to obey.

Isaiah 1:19 speaks of being willing and obedient.

There comes a point when we must make a decision:

“Am I willing to deal with the root?”

2. A Decision

Joshua 24:14–28 presents the importance of making a deliberate choice about whom we will serve.

A root problem is often connected to a decision that was made somewhere along the way.

A decision can become like a seed.

3. Speaking in Tongues

The teaching describes speaking in tongues as a **“switch” that turns on**, connecting it with **1 Corinthians 14:13–15**.

The teaching later emphasizes that speaking or praying in tongues builds us up so we can continue. **1 Corinthians 14:4** says:

“He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself...”

4. Our Revealer — The Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 2:9–10 points us to the Holy Spirit as the One who reveals the things of God.

The teaching emphasizes that the Holy Spirit is **always ready to reveal**.

So, our spiritual radar involves:

WILL → DECISION → SPEAKING IN TONGUES → HOLY SPIRIT REVELATION

2. UNDERSTAND THE ROOT

The teaching distinguishes between at least two categories:

- **Physical root problems**
- **Spiritual root problems**

Think about a tree.

If the tree is bad, cutting off a few branches doesn't solve the problem. The tree must be removed, and the roots must also be dealt with.

The teaching material makes an important observation:

Removing the tree is one thing. Removing the roots is another.

If the roots remain, they can continue to grow and produce new problems.

That's the picture for this teaching:

Bad fruit → Root → Seed → Decision/Thought

If we want lasting change, we have to go deeper than the fruit.

3. JESUS AND THE FIG TREE

The teaching uses Jesus' interaction with the fig tree in **Matthew 21:19–20** and **Mark 11:20–21**.

Matthew records that Jesus spoke to the fig tree, and it withered immediately.

Mark specifically records:

“the fig tree dried up from the roots.”

The teaching emphasizes keeping this passage in context and observes that the fig tree and the mountain discussed in Mark 11 were physical examples.

This provides the teaching picture:

Jesus dealt with the problem at its source.

The teaching then applies the principle of faith and authority to both physical and spiritual problems.

4. DON'T SPEND YOUR LIFE DEALING WITH BAD FRUIT

This is one of the strongest applications in the teaching.

Spiritually speaking, people can become focused on **bad fruit instead of the root problem.**

The result?

They repeatedly deal with the same manifestation.

The teaching specifically observes that pastors and parents can become worn out when they continually deal with bad fruit rather than addressing the root.

Ask yourself:

- What keeps repeating?
- What keeps producing the same reaction?
- What keeps producing the same behavior?
- What keeps producing the same conflict?
- What keeps disturbing my peace?
- What keeps showing up even after I thought I dealt with it?

Don't simply ask:

“How do I get rid of this fruit?”

Ask:

“What is feeding this root?”

5. ROOTS BEGIN WITH SEEDS

The teaching makes an important connection:

A root begins with a seed.

It also identifies **a thought** as a possible seed and describes a progression:

THOUGHT → SPOKEN → ACTION → CONTINUATION

This is why “our thought life” is so important.

A thought does not automatically become an established root simply because it entered your mind.

The teaching specifically notes:

“Just because we had a bad thought does not mean it’s activated.”

That is encouraging.

You can deal with the seed before it becomes a root system.

6. THE ROOT OF BITTERNESS

One of the spiritual root problems identified in the teaching is **bitterness**.

Hebrews 12:15 warns about:

“a root of bitterness”

that can spring up and cause trouble and defile many.

The teaching connects bitterness with Esau and points to the consequences surrounding his birthright and blessing.

Deuteronomy 29:18–19 also describes a root producing **poisonous and bitter fruit**.

Application:

Bitterness rarely begins as a large, visible problem.

It can begin with:

a thought → a decision → repeated consideration → words → actions → a root

That's why the earlier the seed is dealt with, the better.

7. TAKE THE THOUGHT DOWN QUICKLY

This is where **2 Corinthians 10:4–6** becomes central.

The teaching uses these verses to emphasize:

- pulling down strongholds,
- destroying arguments and proud obstacles,
- taking thoughts captive,
- bringing thoughts into obedience to Christ.

The practical method presented in the teaching is:

1. Recognize the thought.

2. Remove it by faith.

3. Replace it with God's Word rightly divided.

The teaching states:

“Once the thought is removed by faith I replace it with God’s word rightly divided.”

That is the key.

Don't leave an empty space. Replace the wrong thought with truth.

8. GOD'S WORD IS THE SOURCE

The teaching repeatedly brings us back to the same foundation:

God and His Word are our Source.

Therefore:

Pray.

Read.

Study.

Apply God's Word.

The objective is to remove the thought or seed **before it grows into a root system** and eventually produces bad fruit.

This is why the teaching calls these:

Everlasting methods—not temporal methods.

9. HOW TO DEAL WITH SPECIFIC THOUGHTS

Practical examples.

Unholy Thought

“Unholy thought, be destroyed in Jesus' name. For it is written...”

Then the teaching directs the believer to **1 Peter 1:15–16**, emphasizing holiness.

Thoughts of Harm

The teaching directs the believer to **Proverbs 19:23** and **Jeremiah 32:40**.

Doubt

“Thought of doubt, be destroyed in Jesus' name.”

Then apply **2 Corinthians 5:7**:

“we walk by faith, not by sight.”

Fear

The teaching uses **Psalms 56:11** and **Proverbs 28:1** to replace fearful thinking with trust and boldness.

Identity

The teaching directs thoughts attacking one's identity toward **Romans 5:17** and **2 Corinthians 5:21**, focusing on the righteousness received through Christ.

10. DEALING WITH WORRY

The teaching gives an especially strong group of Scriptures concerning worry.

Philippians 4:6–9 directs us away from worry and toward:

- prayer,
- thanksgiving,
- God's peace,
- disciplined thinking,
- putting God's Word into practice.

The teaching then adds:

- **2 Thessalonians 3:16** — the Lord of peace
- **Ephesians 2:14** — Christ Himself is our peace
- **1 Thessalonians 5:23–24** — God's work of sanctification
- **Colossians 3:15** — let God's peace rule
- **Isaiah 26:3–4** — perfect peace for the mind that is stayed on God.

The principle:

Don't merely tell yourself, "Stop worrying."

Replace the thought with God's Word.

11. THREE ROOT PROBLEMS

The teaching concludes by identifying three major root problems:

1. Bitterness

2. Moral impurity

3. Greed

It also identifies three major sources of anger:

1. People

2. Environment

3. Self

These are areas where the spiritual radar system can be used to help detect what is happening beneath the surface.

THE APPLICATION

This is not merely a lesson about identifying problems.

It is about **taking responsibility for what happens inside us.**

When something repeatedly produces bad fruit, don't automatically blame the fruit.

Stop.

Ask God to reveal the root.

Then deal with the root according to God's Word.

Remember the progression:

THOUGHT

↓

SEED

↓

DECISION

↓

WORDS

↓

ACTIONS

↓

ROOT

↓

FRUIT

The earlier you deal with it, the easier it is to prevent the root from becoming established.

FINAL CHALLENGE

Don't become so busy cutting off bad fruit that you never deal with the root.

Detect it.

Remove it.

Replace it.

Continue in God's Word.

Use your spiritual radar:

YOUR WILL — Am I willing to obey?

YOUR DECISION — What have I chosen?

SPEAKING IN TONGUES — Am I building myself up?

THE HOLY SPIRIT — What is He revealing?

And above all:

Don't settle for temporary solutions when God has provided everlasting methods.

The goal is not simply to look better on the outside.

The goal is to deal with the root so that the fruit can change into sweet fruit!

Part 6

Detect and Remove Root Problems

SEEK EVERLASTING METHODS OVER TEMPORARY METHODS

This teaching idea came from working with children, but it is effective for all those in Christ.



1 OUR MAIN GOALS

- 1 Detect and remove the root (real problem) to prevent unnecessary trouble.
- 2 Seek everlasting methods over temporal methods.

4 THE TREE AND THE ROOTS

If the tree is bad, both the tree and the roots must be removed. Otherwise the roots will continue to grow and cause new problems.



- Removing the tree is one thing.
- Removing the roots is another.
- As long as the roots remain there will be problems.
- Removing roots is not an easy task.

2 OUR SPIRITUAL RADAR SYSTEM

To help us detect and remove root problems we can use our spiritual radar system. It consists of four areas:



Our will

Determination, willpower, motivation or drive. (Isaiah 1:19)



A decision

(Joshua 24:14-28)



Speaking in tongues

(Switch turns on) (1 Corinthians 14:13-15)



Our Revealer (Holy Spirit)

(Always ready to reveal) (1 Corinthians 2:9-10)

3 TWO TYPES OF ROOT PROBLEMS



Physical root problems



Spiritual root problems

5 JESUS AND THE FIG TREE

Matthew 21:19-20 (NKJV)

"Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away.

Mark 11:20-21 (NKJV)

"Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots."

- This was a physical tree.
- The same authority can be used for physical and spiritual problems.
- It will take faith to cause problems to dry up from the roots.



6 DON'T JUST DEAL WITH BAD FRUIT

- People can spend too much time dealing with bad fruit rather than the root problem.
- This can cause pastors, parents and believers to become worn out.
- A root starts with a seed and grows.
- A seed is planted when a decision is made.
- If the seed receives some water and care, it will grow (positive or negative).

7 FROM THOUGHT TO FRUIT



Just because we have a bad thought does not mean it's activated. We can deal with the seed before it becomes a root system.

8 TAKE WRONG THOUGHTS CAPTIVE



2 Corinthians 10:4-6 (NKJV)
"... taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."

- 1 Recognize the thought.
- 2 Remove it by faith.
- 3 Replace it with God's Word rightly divided.

9 EXAMPLES OF WRONG THOUGHTS AND SCRIPTURES

Unholy thought	1 Peter 1:15-16 — Be holy.
Thoughts of harm	Proverbs 19:23; Jeremiah 32:40
Doubt	2 Corinthians 5:7 — We walk by faith, not by sight.
Fear	Psalms 56:11; Proverbs 28:1
Identity	Romans 5:17; 2 Corinthians 5:21
Worry	Philippians 4:6-9 and related verses

10 THE ROOT OF BITTERNESS

Hebrews 12:15 (NKJV)
"See to it that no root of bitterness spring up and cause trouble, and by it the many become defiled."

Deuteronomy 29:18-19

A root can produce poisonous and bitter fruit.



11 THREE MAJOR ROOT PROBLEMS

- 1 Bitterness
- 2 Moral impurity
- 3 Greed

THREE MAJOR SOURCES FOR ANGER

- 1 People
- 2 Environment
- 3 Self