



Understanding Behavior

Sovereign Grace Church

Feb. 25, 2016

The Dilemma

- ❖ We don't know how to help people change
- ❖ We don't know why others do the things they do
- ❖ We don't know how to help people change

What you'll become aware of tonight...

- ❖ Biblical principles that shed light on why we make the choices we make
- ❖ How to facilitate change in our own lives
- ❖ Suggestions on how to help friends and loved ones change

What is man?



“We are one functionally but two essentially”

–Dr. Sam Williams

“We should be careful with questions like, ‘Is that a spiritual problem or a physical problem?’ Such questions tend to force us into simplistic responses.”

–Dr. Sam Williams

“And he said, “...what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person.”

—Matthew 15:16–20

Where we're going next...

- ❖ What happens in the heart
- ❖ A definition of the heart
- ❖ How the heart affects our behavior
- ❖ Other issues that affect behavior
- ❖ How to apply these principles

What Happens in the Heart?



“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?”

–Jeremiah 17:9

What goes on in our hearts?

❖ Thinking

“Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, “The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob.””

–Genesis 27:41

“But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts?”

–Matthew 9:4

“Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on
your beds, and be silent. *Selah.*”

—*Psalm 4:4–5*

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–Matthew 15:16-20

What goes on in our hearts?

- ❖ Thinking
- ❖ Reflection

““But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them
in her heart.””

–Luke 2:19

What goes on in our hearts?

- ❖ Thinking
- ❖ Reflection
- ❖ Understanding and assessment

“You have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders. But to this day the Lord has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear.”

–Deuteronomy 29:2–4

“If you say in your heart, ‘These nations are greater than I. How can I dispossess them?’ you shall not be afraid of them but you shall remember what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt...”

–Deuteronomy 7:17–18

“If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. But truly God has listened; he has attended to the voice of my prayer.”

—Psalm 66:18–19

What goes on in our hearts?

- ❖ Thinking
- ❖ Reflection
- ❖ Understanding and assessment
- ❖ Planning, longing, and resolving

“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

–Hebrews 4:12

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“Settle it therefore in your minds (hearts) not to meditate beforehand how to answer.”

–Luke 21:14

What goes on in our hearts?

- ❖ Thinking
- ❖ Reflection
- ❖ Understanding and assessment
- ❖ Planning, longing, and resolving
- ❖ Imagining

“The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

– *Genesis 6:5*

What goes on in our hearts?

- ❖ Thinking
- ❖ Reflection
- ❖ Understanding and assessment
- ❖ Planning, longing, and resolving
- ❖ Imagining
- ❖ Revelation of our loyalties

“This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”

– *Matthew 15:8–9*

“Thus Absalom did to all of Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.”

– *2 Samuel 15:6*

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

– *Matthew 6:21*

The Lord judges the heart

- ❖ “For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:6–7, ESV)
- ❖ “I the Lord search the heart and test the mind...” (Jeremiah 17:9–10, ESV)
- ❖ “[The Lord] will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart.” (1 Corinthians 4:5, ESV)

What Is the Heart?



“...the heart is the centre of the inner life of man and the source or seat of all the forces and functions of soul and spirit.”

– *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*

““Heart” refers to the moral and motivational control center of a person. It is either the contents (Luke 6:45; Matthew 6:19-21) or the condition (Ezekiel 36:25-26) of the “heart” that dictates what we see in a person’s lifestyle—the behavior, speech, emotional reactions, attitudes, reasoning, etc.”

– Dr. Jeff Forrey

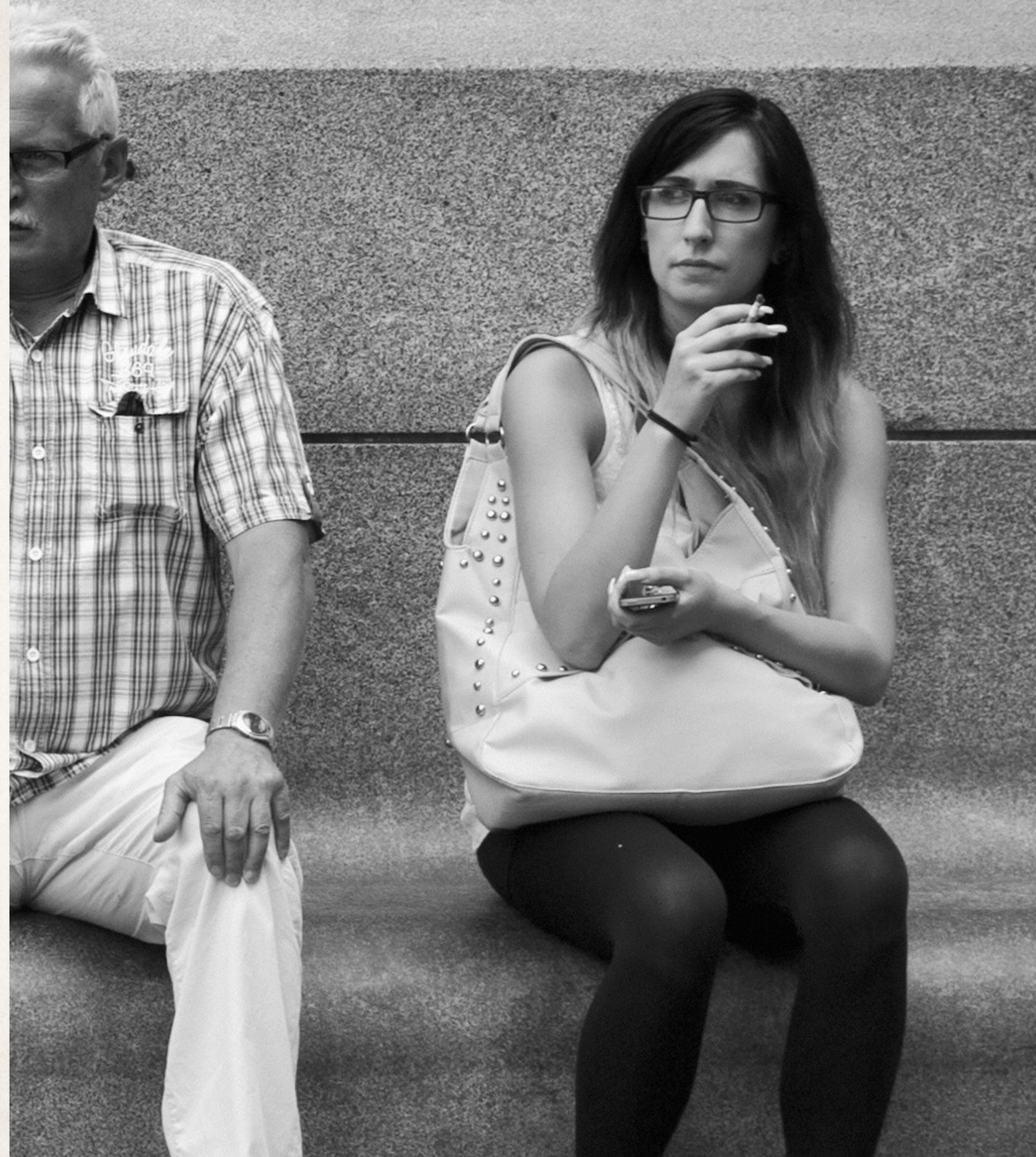
The “heart” is the motivational control center of a person means that the “heart” represents the person’s values, standards, loyalties, and ultimate commitments. That is why Jesus could affirm that one’s “treasures” reflect one’s “heart.”

– *Dr. Jeff Forrey*

“The Bible depicts the heart as our inner rational control center that determines our direction in life, based upon our perceptions of God, others, ourselves and our world. Our thoughts direct our actions (Romans 12:1-2). Our inner rational, mental control center determines our direction in life by setting and following fixed, deliberate purposes. It is in our inner rational control center that we decide what way or direction we will go, what actions we will take, and what affections we will pursue.”

– Dr. Bob Kellemen

How the heart affects behavior



We are made in the image of God

- ❖ Rational
- ❖ Relational
- ❖ Emotional
- ❖ Volitional

People are like businesses

- ❖ Core values
- ❖ Mission
- ❖ Vision
- ❖ Strategy



“We pursue what we perceive to be pleasing.”

– *Dr. Bob Kellemen*

How the heart affects behavior

- ❖ What I believe about what satisfies my longings for relationship provides the direction that I choose to pursue and determines my response.
- ❖ I do what I determine I delight in
- ❖ I read purposeful pathways to satisfy my affections according to my mindset.
- ❖ I choose what I conclude my soul craves.
- ❖ I pursue what I perceive to be lovely and loving.
- ❖ What I find beautiful, I try to find.

“Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled
is a tree of life.”

– *Proverbs 13:12*

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in
turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise
him, my salvation and my God.

– *Psalm 43:5*

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

– *Hebrews 4:15–16, ESV*

Other factors that affect behavior



“Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.”

– *1 Corinthians 15:33*

“Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.”

– *Proverbs 13:20*

“Christian maturity comes up short when there is no training and discipline, no proper nurturing and care for the body. Multiple studies have shown the psychological and biological benefits of exercise: stabilizing moods, reducing anxiety and depression, improving intellectual performance, increasing energy, improving sleep and appetite, and improving the health and resilience of the body.”

– *Dr. Sam Williams*

“A healthy diet can also improve emotional and cognitive functioning. People feel and think better, for both biological and psychological reasons, when they are eating to live rather than living to eat, or starving themselves, or overdosing on junk food. Excessive sugar or caffeine intake can exacerbate or even cause emotional instability.”

– *Dr. Sam Williams*

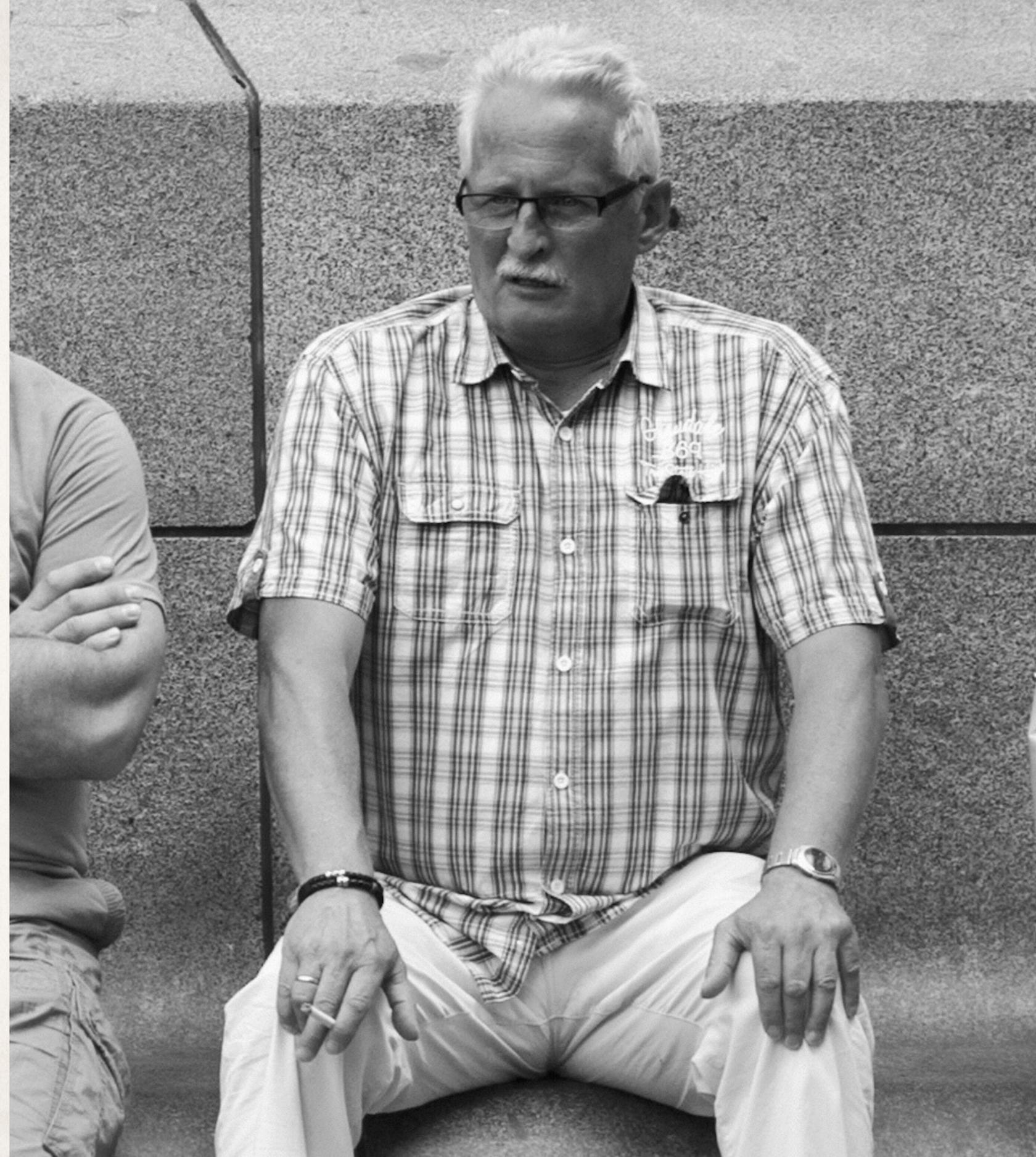
Problems with seemingly no spiritual cause?

- ❖ We are spiritual and physical creatures
- ❖ The person may be unaware of thought patterns and
- ❖ Their symptoms may be indirectly caused by heart driven behaviors
- ❖ Is it sin? Don't presume it is.

Problems with seemingly no spiritual cause?

- ❖ Why not?
- ❖ If the problem is physical, it's still interpreted / processed by the heart.
- ❖ More on this later...

How to help others



How to help others

- ❖ Find out what people want from you
- ❖ Recognize what you're capable of

“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

– *Hebrews 4:12*

“And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.”

– *Colossians 1:18*

How to help others

- ❖ Find out what people want from you
- ❖ Recognize what you're capable of
- ❖ Don't downplay significance of "non spiritual" factors
- ❖ Be humble. You don't see the heart like God does
- ❖ Remember that people are willful / volitional / strategists

How to help others

- ❖ Observe yourself and your friends
 - ❖ What affections reign in my friend's soul?
 - ❖ What mindsets reign in my friend's soul?
 - ❖ What purposes reign in my friend's soul?
 - ❖ What mood states reign in my friend's soul?

How to help others

- ❖ Sustain
- ❖ Heal
- ❖ Reconcile
- ❖ Guide



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