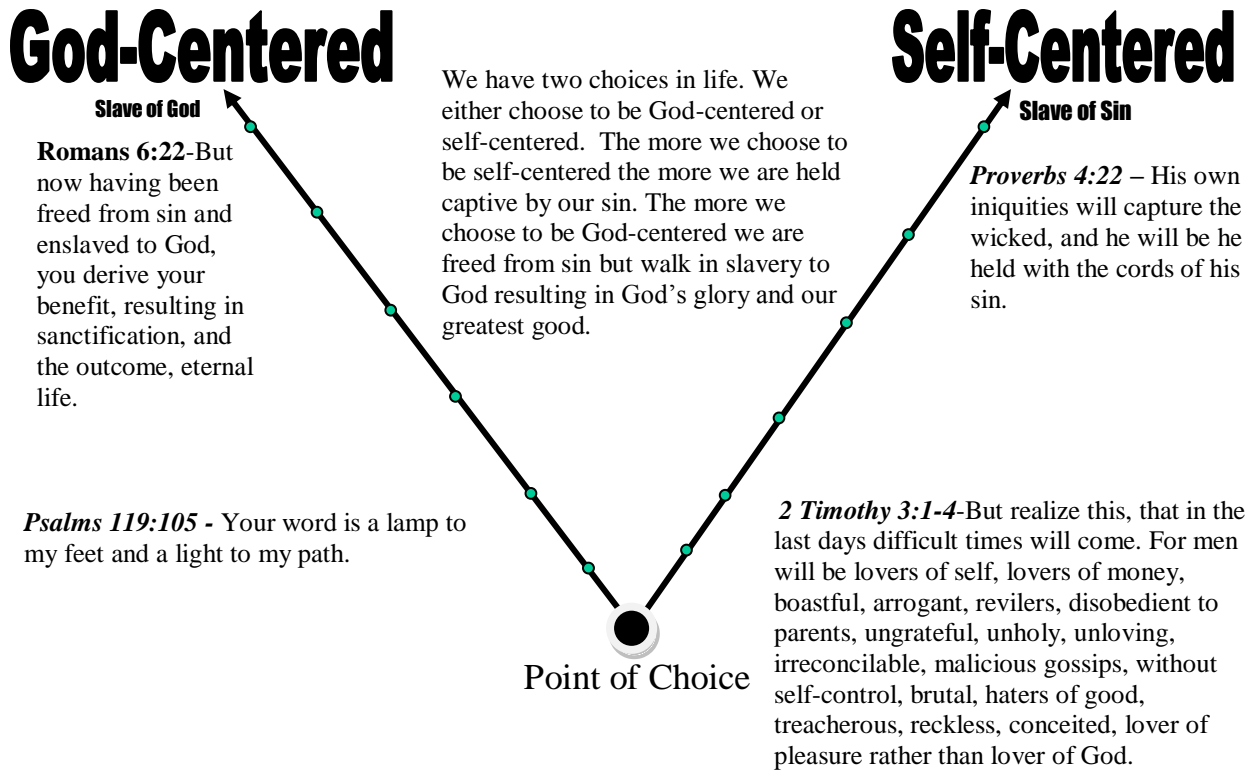


The Point of Choice

- I. **We choose to be God-Centered or Self-Centered.** (*Galatians 5:16-25*)
(*See Illustration of Point I*)
 - a. When we are God-centered we choose to live our lives for God resulting in doing things according to God's standards. (Psalm 119:105)
 - b. When we are self-centered we choose to live our lives for ourselves resulting in doing things according to our own agenda. (2Timothy 3:1-4)
 - c. When we choose to live for ourselves instead of living for God we will live in slavery to sin. (Proverbs 4:22).
 - d. When we choose to live for God instead of living for ourselves we live in slavery to God (Romans 6:22).

Illustration of Point I.



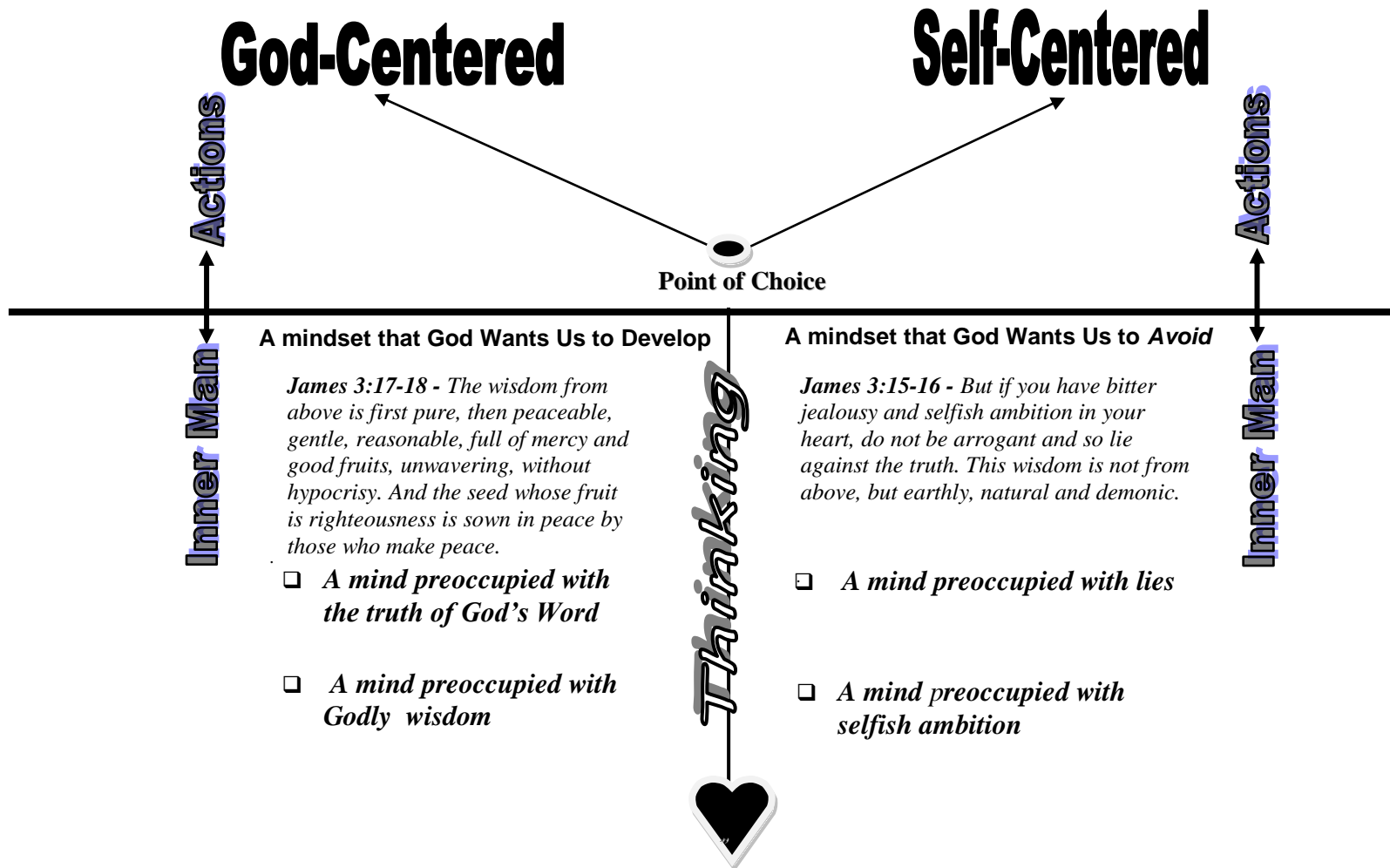
Graphics developed by Cathy Poulos from the presentation "Idols of the Heart," by Mark Dutton, NANC On-the-Road-Training, Track #1, Module #2, November 2003, Houston, TX.

The Point of Choice

II. **Our choices are driven by our thoughts.** (*Romans 8:5*)
(*See illustration of Point II*)

- a. When we are self-centered, our thoughts are dominated by lies and selfish ambition. (James 3:13-16)
- b. As a result of those lies and selfish ambition, our thoughts tend to be driven and reduced to what we have been denied, what we believe we deserve, what we want, what we think we should have or what we think we need. We become friendly with the world and unfriendly with God. (James 4:1-10)
- c. When we are God-centered, our thoughts are dominated by truth and wisdom. (James 3:17-18)
- d. As a result being dominated by truth and wisdom, our thoughts tend to be driven by what God commands of us and how to live according to that; We focus on things such as what God promises to do for us and when to expect it. We tend to also focus on what God is doing for us, has done for us as well as what we can be doing for others and how to do it accordingly. (James 3:17-18)

Illustration of Point II.



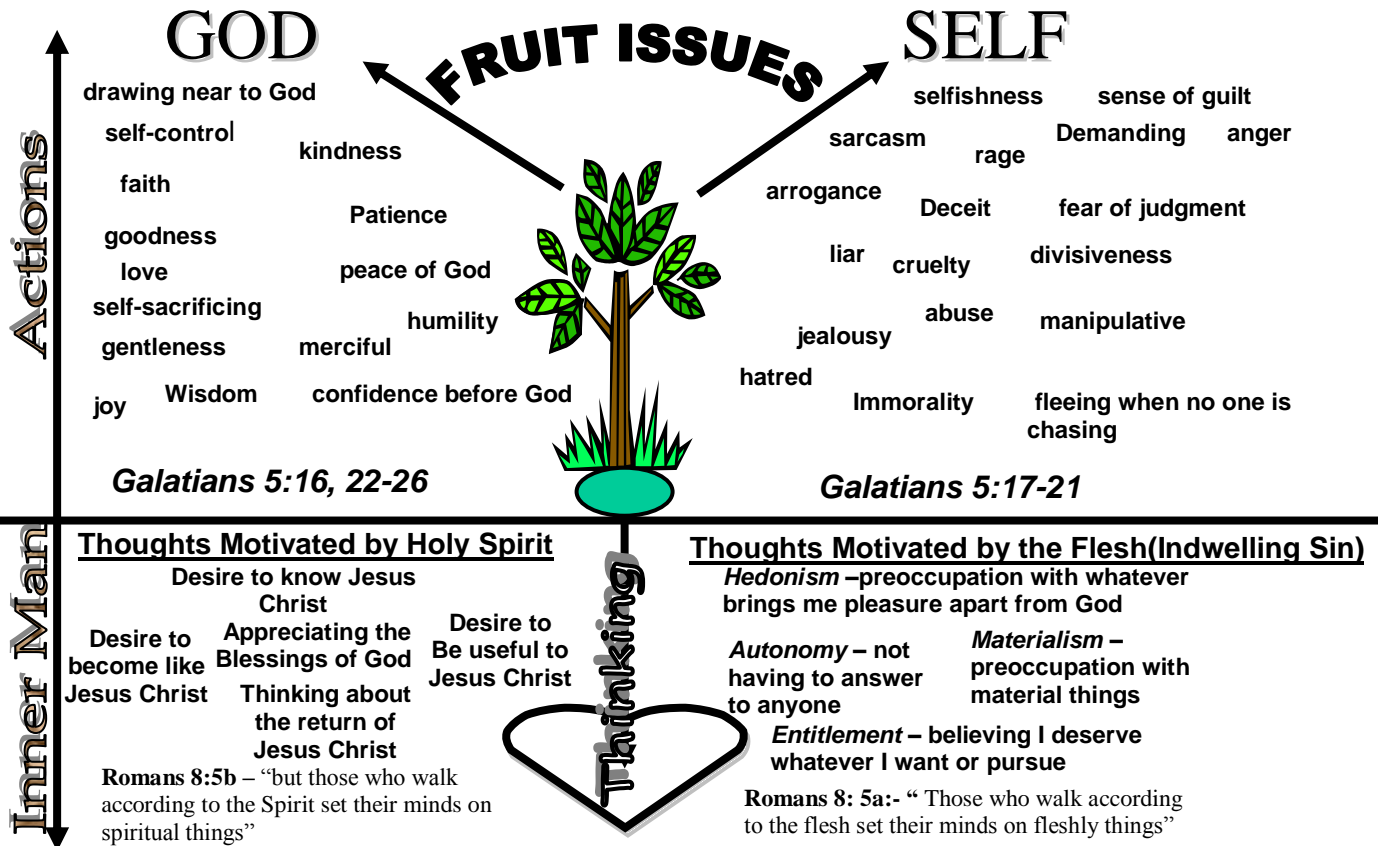
Graphics developed by Cathy Poulos from the presentation "The Heart of Man as Presented in the Book of Psalms," by Mark Dutton, Co-Pastor of Faith Baptist Church, Lafayette, IN; NANC certified instructor.

The Point of Choice

III. Our thoughts are motivated by the flesh (sin in our hearts) or by the Holy Spirit Romans 8:1-14 *(See illustration of Point III)*

- a. When our thoughts are motivated by the flesh (sin in our hearts) we are preoccupied with issues such as hedonism (preoccupation with whatever bring me pleasure apart from God), autonomy (independence from authority; not having to answer to any one), materialism (preoccupation with material things), and entitlement (believing I deserve whatever I want or pursue) dominate our thinking.
- b. This leads to further disobedience to God. We will see things such as anger, hatred, immorality, jealousy, abuse, cruelty, lying, selfish ambition, arrogance, rage, sarcasm or selfishness. This leads to a guilty conscience, a fear of God's judgment, and a desire to escape God's judgment resulting in trying to flee from the inevitable consequences of disobedience to God. (2 Timothy 3:1-9, Proverbs 28:1)
- c. When our thoughts are motivated by the Holy Spirit we tend to be preoccupied with a desire to know Jesus Christ, to become like Jesus Christ, to be useful to Jesus Christ, the return of Jesus Christ, and the blessing in this life and the life to come from Jesus Christ our Lord.
- d. This leads to further obedience to God. We will see things such as humility, patience, peace, joy, self-sacrifice, kindness, goodness, mercy, love, faith, gentleness, self-control, and wisdom. This leads to a peaceful conscience, a confidence in the presence of God, and a desire to draw near to God resulting in drawing near to God. (Galatians 5:22-25)

Illustration of Point III.



Graphics by Cathy Poulos

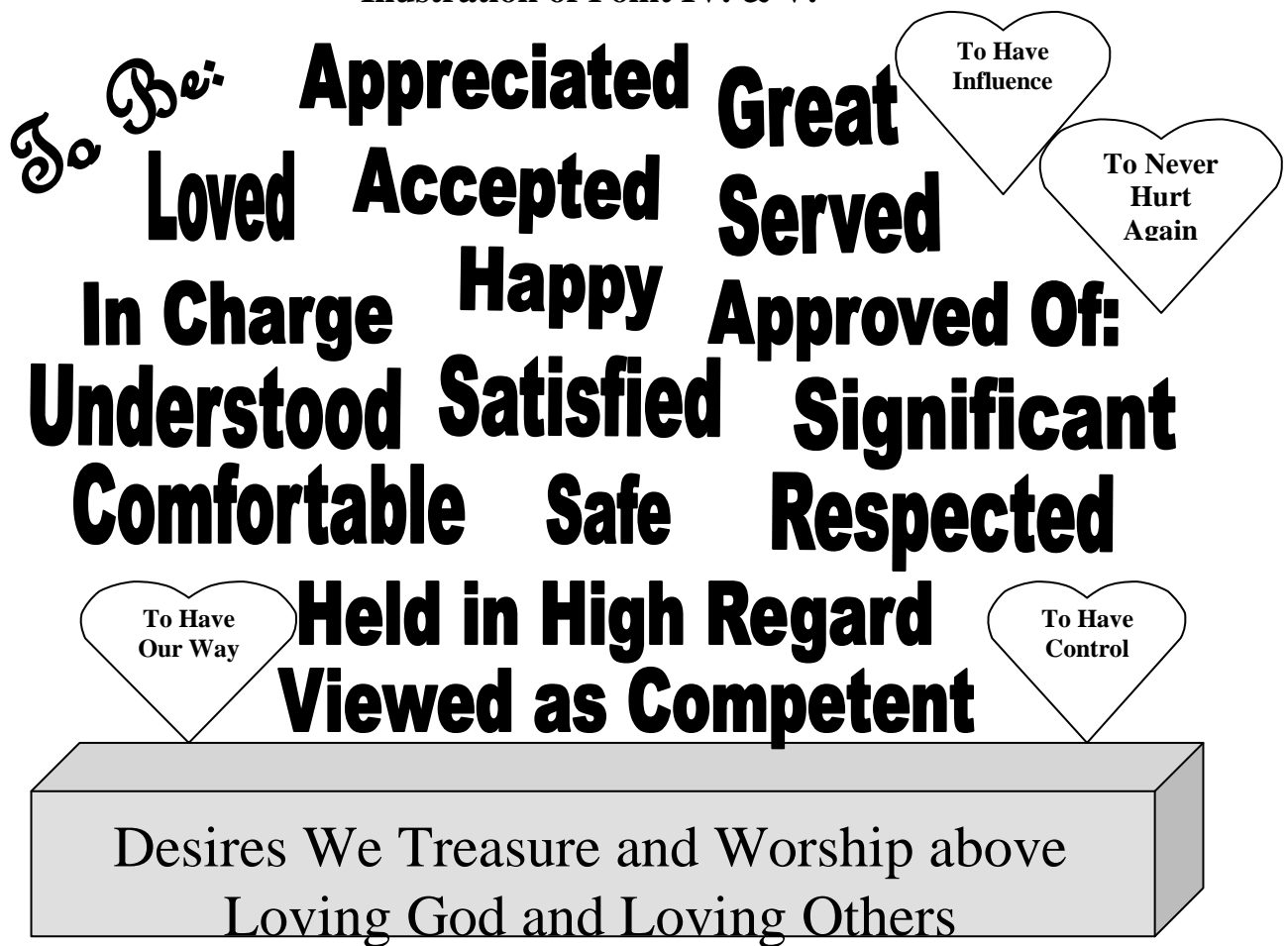
The Point of Choice

IV. When our thoughts are driven by the flesh (sin in our hearts) we will begin to worship our desires, turning them into the lusts of our lives.

(James 4:1-3) (See Illustration of Point IV and V)

- a. Our minds will be set on things below instead of things above leading us to make self interest a priority over God's will. We focus less and less on loving God and loving others; we focus more and more on using God and using others according to our self interest. (Philippians 3:17-19, James 3:13-4:3)
- b. Our desires will become preoccupations resulting in us looking for avenues to satisfy these desires we have started to worship. We look to any person, place, product, or perspective we believe will satisfy these desires we have started to worship above loving God and loving others. (James 4:1-3)
- c. We will build our lives around these desires we have started to worship above loving God and loving others.
(Philippians 3:17-19)
- d. We will become servants of our flesh to satisfy these desires we have started to worship above loving God and loving others. (Galatians 5:16-21)

Illustration of Point IV. & V.



The Point of Choice

- V. **As we make choices according to the desires we have begun to worship we will find ourselves on a path of difficulty and hard times.** (*Proverbs 13:15*) (*See Illustration of Point IV and V*)
- a. We will become a slave to that which we pursue above loving God and loving others. (2Peter 2:18-19)
 - b. We will develop sinful habits that are hard to repent and replace as a result pursuing those desires we worship above loving God and loving others. (Proverbs 5:21-22)
 - c. We will reap negative consequences of our sinful habits and pursuit of those desires we worship above loving God and loving others. (Galatians 6:7-8)
 - d. We will have a negative affect on the lives of those around us as a result of pursuing those desires we worship above loving God and loving others. (1Corinthians 5:1-6)

Illustration of Point IV. & V.

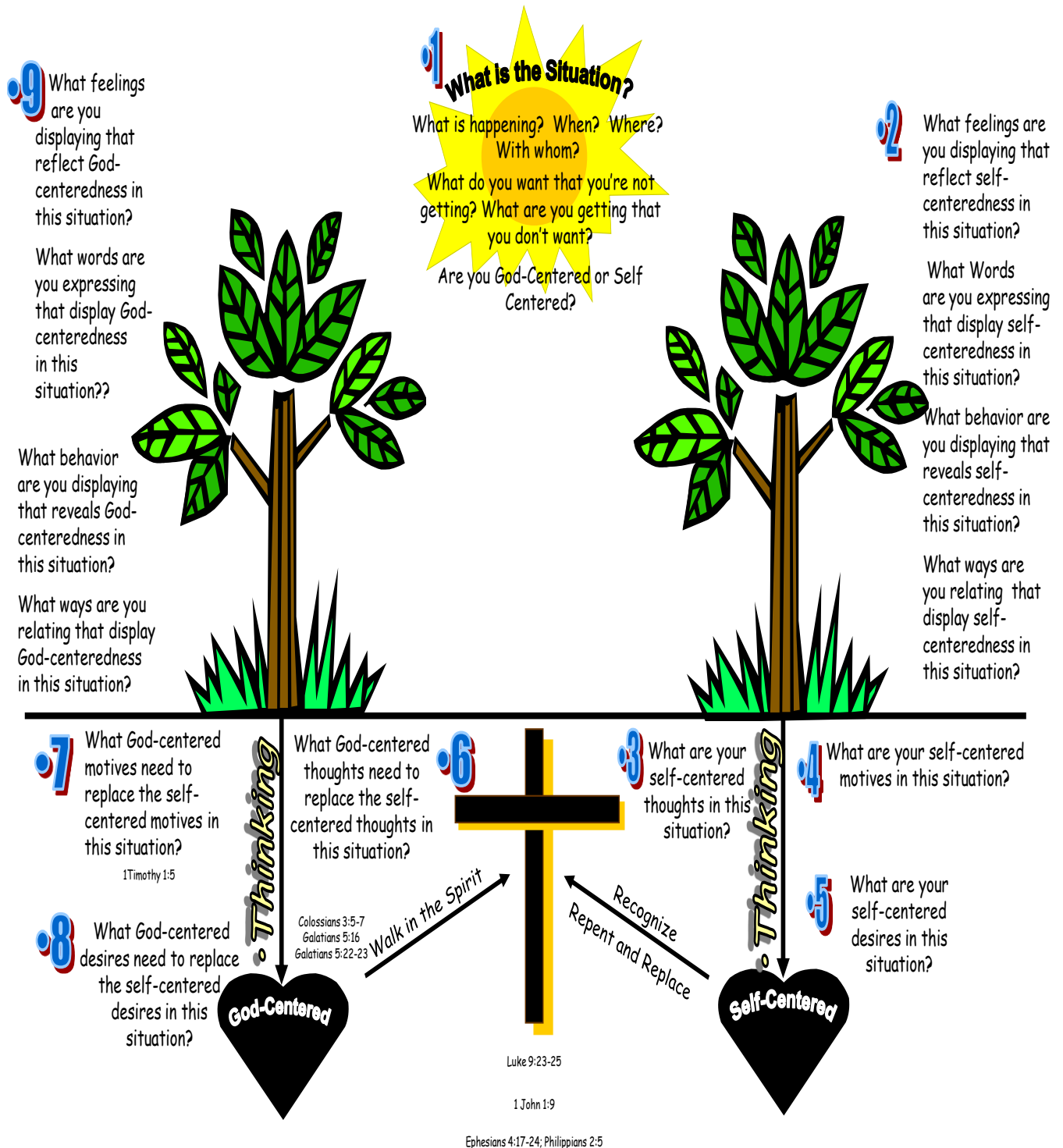


The Point of Choice

VI. We must turn from a self-centered life to a God-Centered life through the Person, Power and Precepts of Jesus Christ. (*Romans 13:8-14*)

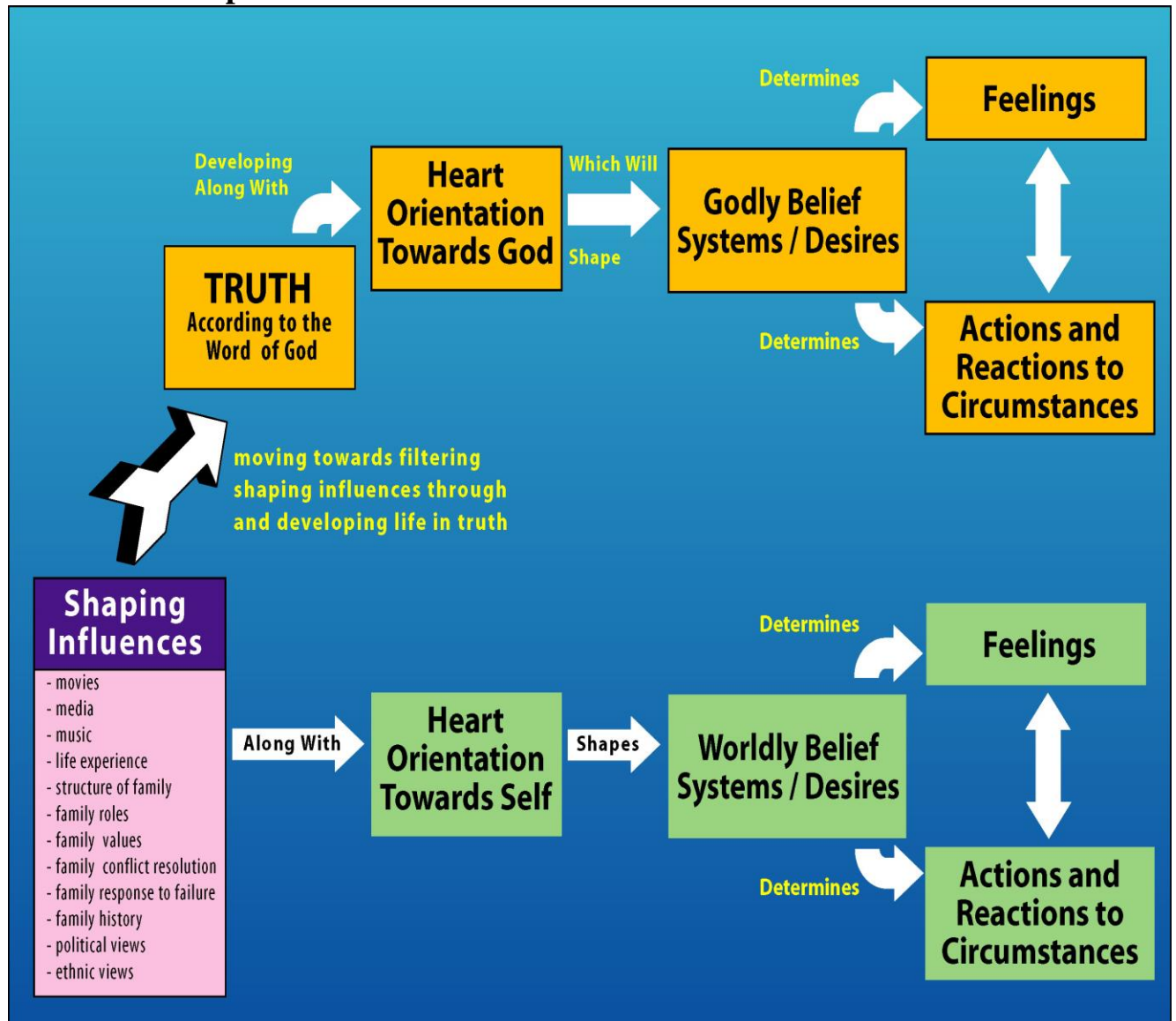
(See Illustration of Point VI)

- a. We must identify the areas of our lives where we are dominated by lies, selfish ambition, hedonism, autonomy, materialism, entitlement, and lustful pursuits above loving God and loving others; We must identify where this is happening in our attitudes, intentions, desires words, actions, relationship patterns and service to God and confess and repent of these things accordingly. (Proverbs 28:13-14)
- b. We must decide to make God a priority in all that we think, say and do. (1Corinthians 10:31)
- c. The areas of lives where we are dominated by lies, selfish ambition, hedonism, autonomy, materialism, entitlement, and lustful pursuits, must be replaced with specific obedience to God accordingly in those areas. (Ephesians 4:17-32, Colossians 3:1-25)
- d. In other words, we must guard our hearts from self-centeredness by walking in genuine love for God and love for others in our attitudes, intentions, desires, words, actions, relationship patterns, and service.



Graphics by Cathy Poulos

Illustration for point VI.



Graphics by Adrian Baxter

Discussion Questions

1. When looking at the choices that you have made today, were you self-centered or God centered in your choices? Write down you findings. .

2. Identify thought patterns you have which are rooted in lies and selfish ambition then identify thought patterns you have that are rooted in truth and godly wisdom. Explain how these thought patterns determined your choices above.

3. What desires have you allowed to become a form of worship resulting in further complications in your life?

4. What loving thoughts, motives, desires words, actions, relationship patterns and service do you need to walk in to replace the sin you are in?
