

SESSION 2

— CHANGE *the* —
ROOTS,
— CHANGE *the* —
FRUITS



REBOOT SIX: FIRST RESPONDERS

CHANGE THE ROOTS, CHANGE THE FRUITS

WATCH THE VIDEO

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After watching the video, continue reading and working through the following pages to complete this session.

CONTINUE THE JOURNEY

In 2004, the world's oldest known living tree was discovered in Dalarna Province in Sweden far above the normal tree line at an elevation of 2,985 feet. The tree is a Norway Spruce, which are often used as Christmas trees in European homes. It is only 13 feet tall, but its root system has been growing for 9,550 years – since the end of the last Ice Age. The above-ground part of the tree isn't that old, relatively speaking, with a lifespan of only about 600 years. But each time the main stem begins to die back, a new one emerges from the same root stock.

There are several factors contributing to why this tree has lived to such an ancient age: good soil, no forest fires, and high altitude, which means less competition from other

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plants. This tree also has unobstructed access to sunlight, no loggers, no Christmas tree hunters, and no beavers. When it comes to living a long life, environment is everything.

This session is about that principle. *Where* the roots of first responders' lives are planted plays a large role in governing their physical, mental, and spiritual health. In this session, you'll have the opportunity to look at the roots of your life and determine where they are currently placed and if they are truly healthy.

At the start of the video, three tough questions were posed. Let's review them:

- **Why would God bring me into a world with so much pain?**
- **Why doesn't He just take my suffering away?**
- **Why did He even create me if He knew I'd have so much trouble and trauma in my life?**

? **Have you ever asked questions like these? Did you ever come up with any satisfying answers?**

It's important to understand that these questions have been asked by people for thousands of years. If you've asked them, you fit right into the mainstream of civilization. In addition, thousands of books have been written trying to answer these questions.

These kinds of questions are not flippant or shallow but are among the deepest questions that humans can ask. We won't pretend to come up with a perfect, conclusive answer in this session today, but hopefully we'll bring about a few points that will help you to resolve some of the tension that might exist in your minds between the notion of a loving God and the trauma you have experienced.

? **Look at the two fill-in-the-blank statements on the next page. Do you recall the statements from the video? Fill in the blanks:**

NATURAL TRAUMA



_____ is done _____ us.



MALEVOLENT TRAUMA

_____ is done _____ us.

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You may not know that the word *sin* was originally a Greek archery term to designate how far an arrow missed its target. The archer would set up a target with a bullseye, shoot the arrow, and if he didn't hit the center they would measure how much it missed by. This measurement was called the 'sin' of the arrow. In terms of how it was adopted for use in the Bible, there is a bullseye of standards, attitudes and behaviors that are in line with the rules of right and wrong which God has put in each of us.

You've probably heard it said that "nobody's perfect." Everyone has missed that bullseye of perfection – some by a little, some by a lot. But this "mark-missing" is at the foundation of all malevolent trauma.

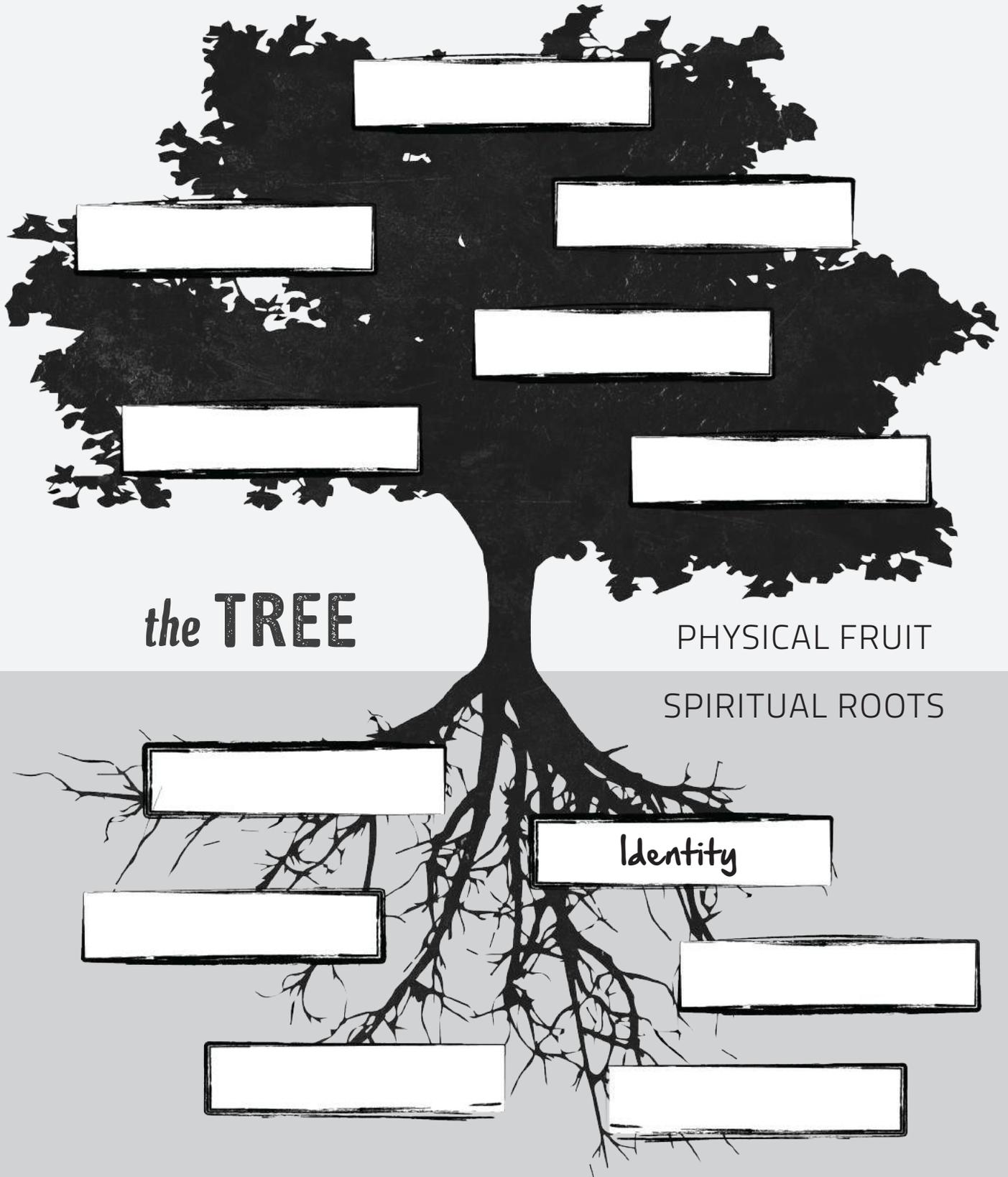
Look at *The Tree* illustration on the next page. In this illustration, the "physical fruit" in the upper part represents attitudes and behaviors produced by damaged roots and contaminated soil due to the trauma we have experienced.

Think about some of the symptoms of trauma that concern you the most in your own life, then **write those symptoms** into the blanks in the upper part of the tree.

Next, turn your attention to the lower part of the illustration – the "spiritual roots." These represent the various factors that may have led to the symptoms you wrote down as "fruits."

What are some of the key "spiritual root" factors that can produce these harmful symptoms? You'll notice one example has already been written: "Identity." What are some others? **Fill in the blanks in the lower part of the illustration** with any factors have played a big role in producing the tainted fruit in your own life.

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the **TREE**

PHYSICAL FRUIT

SPIRITUAL ROOTS

Identity

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Have you ever pulled a weed from the ground only to see a new weed pop up in its place soon after? Why does this happen? Because the weed is merely a visible indication of a much deeper and more extensive root system. Yes, pulling that weed will remove it from your view and restore a nice, attractive lawn for the moment, but you can be assured that without addressing the problem at the root level, the weeds will multiply and worsen over time.

This is how it is with many of the struggles you may have been facing as a result of your first responder career. If you leave the “spiritual root” issues unresolved, your “physical fruit” issues will persist and grow out of control. Simply treating the outward symptoms of trauma is insufficient if you seek to live a life that is truly free.

The goal of this course is to dig deeper than the surface. Do you want to do that? Are you ready and willing to go deeper?

We want you to develop healthy roots surrounded by healthy soil. If we can achieve that together, we’re not saying you’ll live a free and easy life with no challenges. But you will certainly live more happy and productive years than you might have thought possible.

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SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

If you're working through REBOOT SIX alongside a small group, use the following questions to encourage further discussion about this session's topic.

- ① Why did God bring us into a world with so much pain?
- ② What are the spiritual roots that, if unhealthy, could produce harmful symptoms?
- ③ Can you think of a time you've provided medical care to a patient, or you've received care yourself, when only the symptoms were treated rather than the underlying issue causing the symptoms? How effective was that course of action? What would be different if the roots of the issue were treated instead?
- ④ What negative fruit can you identify in your life that is causing pain or has caused pain in the past? How have you treated the symptoms, or fruit, as compared to the roots?