My **Tree**

Jesus used a simple word picture to illustrate an important truth about people. Just as a tree shows its nature by the fruit it produces, the inner nature of a person—what he wants and what he believes—is revealed by the fruit—the actions and words—produced in his life (Luke 6:43-45).

This simple illustration gives us so much hope because it shows us that true, lasting change is really possible. But real change goes beyond simply trying to take off the bad fruit and replace it with good fruit. A deeper change is needed. We need God to expose the sin in our inner man—our sinful desires and our wrong beliefs about Him. Real change begins when we seek after God in faith and repentance, humbly asking him to change our "tree."

The tree example below illustrates possible actions, desires, and beliefs that may be present in the life of someone neglecting God's priorities.[1] While not exhaustive, these examples are intended to help you think about this problem on a deeper level—at the level of the *heart*—where change ultimately needs to take place.

How to do this study:

- **Step 1:**
  Read through the tree example on page 3. Circle any of the words or phrases that describe your personal struggle.

- **Step 2:**
  Transfer these words/phrases to the blank tree (on page 4) that represents your own life (i.e., "My Tree").

- **Step 3:**
  Use the blank tree diagram to continue writing down your actions and words, desires and values, thoughts and beliefs. What is God showing you about what needs to change in your life? Remember, merely trying to stop outward actions will not result in lasting change.

- **Step 4:**
  Ask God to continue to show you what is going on *below* the surface.
  - What does a neglect of God's priorities reveal about what you really **want** and **value**?
  - What do your choices and desires reveal about what you really **believe** about God, yourself, others, or your circumstances?

- **Step 5:**
  Share your tree with a trusted adult who can disciple you in this area. Ask for practical help in knowing how to **repent** of your wrong beliefs, desires, and actions and how to **put on** right beliefs, desires, and actions.
  - What aspect of **God's character** (who He is) or **God's promises** (what He says) do you need to read, study, memorize, meditate on, and apply to your life?

[1] If the Tree model is new to you, please refer to *The Tree: A Short Explanation of God's Hope and Help for Change* for a fuller explanation. You can find it on the Resources page of the Lifeline for Teens website (lifelineforteens.com/resources/tree).

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- What new **desires** do you think God will form in you as you get to know Him better and learn to trust His character and words?
- What kinds of good **fruit** should you expect to see growing in your life as a result of knowing and believing God's Word?

Change takes time. But as you humbly apply God's truth to your life, God will give you grace to grow.

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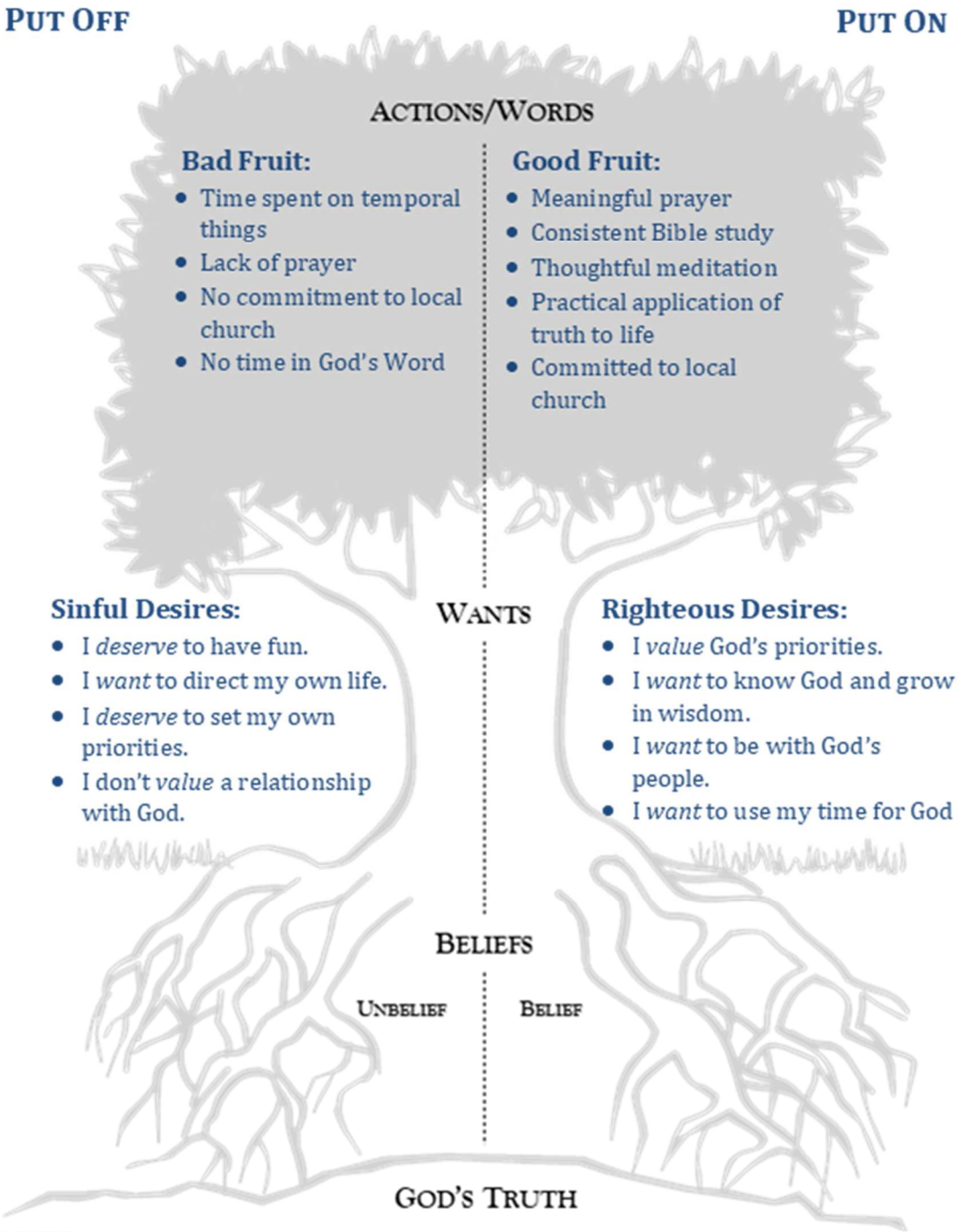
Neglecting God's Priorities



RENEW

God says...

Psalm 19:7-11; Proverbs 2:1-6; John 8:31-32; 1 Peter 2:2

God is...

God is Wisdom. God is Truth. God is Supreme. God is Jealous.

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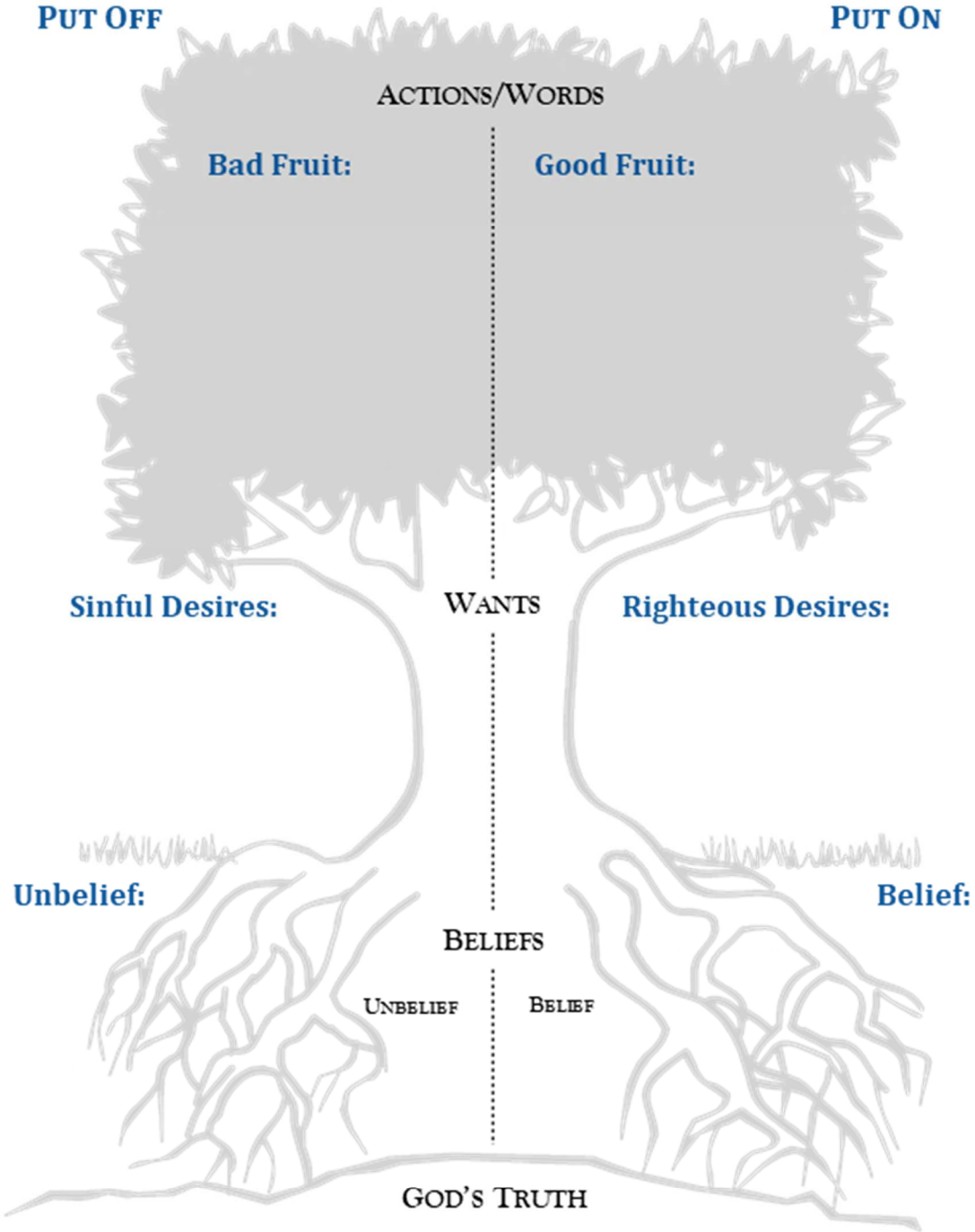
My Tree



RENEW

God says . . .

God is . . .

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