

## Week Two Morph Me

# MISPERCEPTIONS

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Consider a question...

If the *real me* is holy and blameless, why didn't I get a perfect score on the Fruit of the Spirit Assessment?

Or put another way...

If the *real me* is truly a saint, then what's with all the struggle?

These questions are not only honest, they're important. Yes, we are new people, but we don't always live as new people. Why? Even more, what can we do about it? How can we ever-increasingly experience fruit of the Spirit in our daily lives?

Before we rush to explanations, consider physical fruit. Physical fruit spoils for many reasons: low sunlight, poor soil quality, limited water, and more. Similarly, a number of explanations can be given for a lack of spiritual fruit in our lives. Throughout this *Morph* experience, we'll explore potential causes for poor spiritual fruit that surfaced through the Fruit of the Spirit Assessment. This week, we focus on one particularly damaging cause—particularly damaging because it so often goes unnoticed.

Consider again this brief paragraph from the reading...

*Perception influences action. The person who believes his car is trashy will treat that car in a trashy manner. The person who believes her house is dilapidated will treat that house in a dilapidated manner. Tragic is the life lived with a warped view of self. This new heart we have been given will beat for the greatest and grandest of things, the love of God. If, though, we deny this new heart and assume the old heart, we will, no doubt, live in accordance with our old self, our old heart. If Christ has done a revolutionary work, we must recognize this work and deny old perceptions. To miss this will influence our actions, and even more, it will dishonor God.*

Put succinctly: Perception influences fruit.

The Morph Me exercises of this week and next week work together. This week, you'll work to uncover harmful misperceptions about the real you. Next week, you'll address these misperceptions by developing affirmations, based on Scripture, about the real you.

Because misperceptions are inherently self-deceptive, this week's exercise comes in three stages and is done in small increments throughout the week rather than a single sitting. These are the stages:

### **First Stage: Self-Reflection**

What is already stirring in you about misperceptions? Maybe something. Maybe nothing. The

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questions in this stage are designed to help you self-diagnose areas of potential misperception.

**Second Stage: Conversations**

Because self-diagnosis is limited, this stage is designed to help you listen to both God and others for areas of potential misperception. You'll be asked to question God and one or two others over the next week.

**Third Stage: Summary**

Based on your own self-reflection and based on conversations with God and others, you'll summarize your thoughts in this final stage and clarify areas of misperception.

As with all exercises, you will get out of this what you put into it. Yes, it will be very tempting to just do the Self-Reflection and skip the conversations. Before taking this route, consider carefully the danger of misperceptions. Identifying misperceptions could bring significant and lasting change to your life. You're encouraged to make the most of this exercise.

## FIRST STAGE SELF-REFLECTION

### First Impressions

As you read this week's reading, you may already know areas where you are not yet recognizing the real you. Before considering questions to provoke your thinking, what are your first impressions? How might you be viewing yourself in a manner inconsistent with the way God views you? Feel free to not only write fully mature thoughts but also little inklings to explore further.



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**Preliminary Findings**

Based on your self-reflection so far, what misperceptions have you identified about yourself?

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## SECOND STAGE CONVERSATIONS

By their very nature, misperceptions about self are ripe for self-deception. While the self-reflection of the First Stage is essential, it must not be done in isolation. This Second Stage is conversational.

Three things to know:

- ▶ This stage is done as you go about your next week and not in a single sitting.
- ▶ You are asked to listen to both God and people.
- ▶ You are asked to take the Observations sheet (the page that follows) out of the binder and carry it with you.

Four steps to follow:

**1. Ask God to reveal misperceptions you have about yourself.**

*Either audibly or in written form, talk to God, and simply ask him to speak to you about any misperceptions you are carrying. Ask that you would have eyes that see and ears that hear.*

**2. Ask one or two people the following question:**

Do I carry any misperceptions about myself, positive or negative, that you can see in my life?

*Before you begin, you might want to explain to them that you are doing an exercise for an experience called Morph. If need be, explain that part of the experience is developing a healthy view of yourself and weeding out misperceptions. Make a copy of this week's Reading and give it to them if they're interested.*

**3. Listen for God's voice.**

*God may speak to you through the people you ask. Or God may speak to you through other means. Have an open ear for God's voice. You may be in a meeting, for example, and find yourself wondering why you're talking so much. Is God speaking to you through this wondering? Watch and listen for these moments.*

**4. Reflect on what you've learned by simply writing your observations on the following page and summarizing misperceptions in the final stage of this exercise.**

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**Observations**

Carry this with you for a week or so. Write important insights from the conversations you have or other moments of insight. What misperceptions might you be carrying about yourself? What influences do you need increased clarity around? Is God speaking to you through any moments or thoughts? If needed, use additional paper.



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## THIRD STAGE SUMMARIZE

Summarize any critical observations that you made through this Morph Me exercise.



In the following box, state potential or actual misperceptions as succinctly as possible.

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Finally, look back once more at your summary results for the Fruit of the Spirit Assessment on page 36 and consider how the misperceptions that you identified in this week's Morph Me exercise might be contributing to any areas of lacking spiritual fruit. Record your thoughts below.



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Week 2, Morph Me, p. 66