

Workshop 4



Providing support & help #3 *Uncovering & challenging sin*

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Overview

1. Introduce a model to help us locate sin within the experience of depression.
2. Consider a case study to think about how we might identify and address sin.
3. Review the benefits, problems and outstanding questions we have.



Question 1

A church has a member who has been increasingly struggling with depressive symptoms for a number of months. As things have become worse they've approached their church leaders for help and advice. Feeling out of their depth the church leaders have sought counsel from you in good faith. They want to know how they can work out whether the struggle this man is facing is a spiritual or medical problem.

Is this something that is a result of a broken body/ mind, a spiritual depression, or sin?



A More Simplistic Approach

Biological

Positive

Recognises broken bodies/ minds

Avoids false guilt

Problems

Tends towards victim-hood

Minimises agency

Sin Excluded

Spiritual

Positive

Recognises relationship with God

Highlights responsibility to others

Possibly increase agency

Problems

Illegitimate guilt

Assumes bodily health

Tend towards sin-hunts



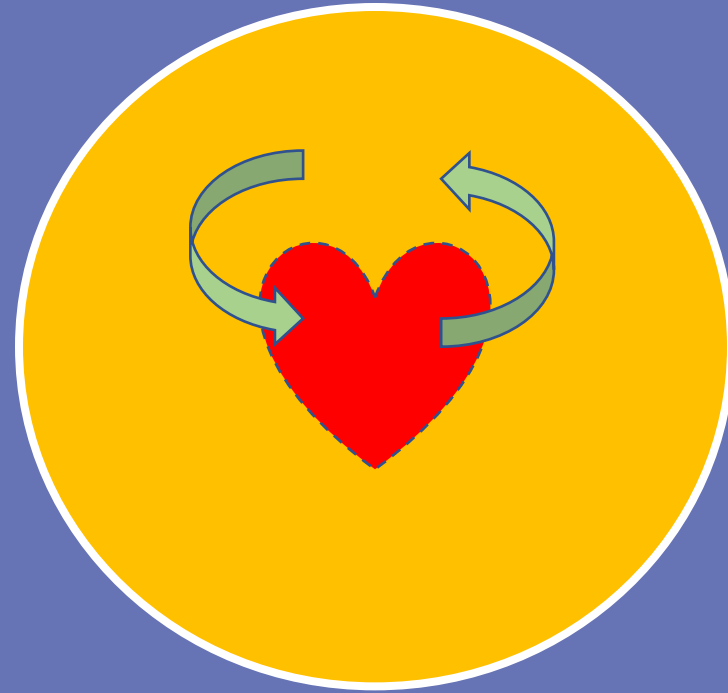
Question 2

Which way are you more inclined?

Is there anything you would add to the table?



Context



Exploring sin in the context of two way traffic



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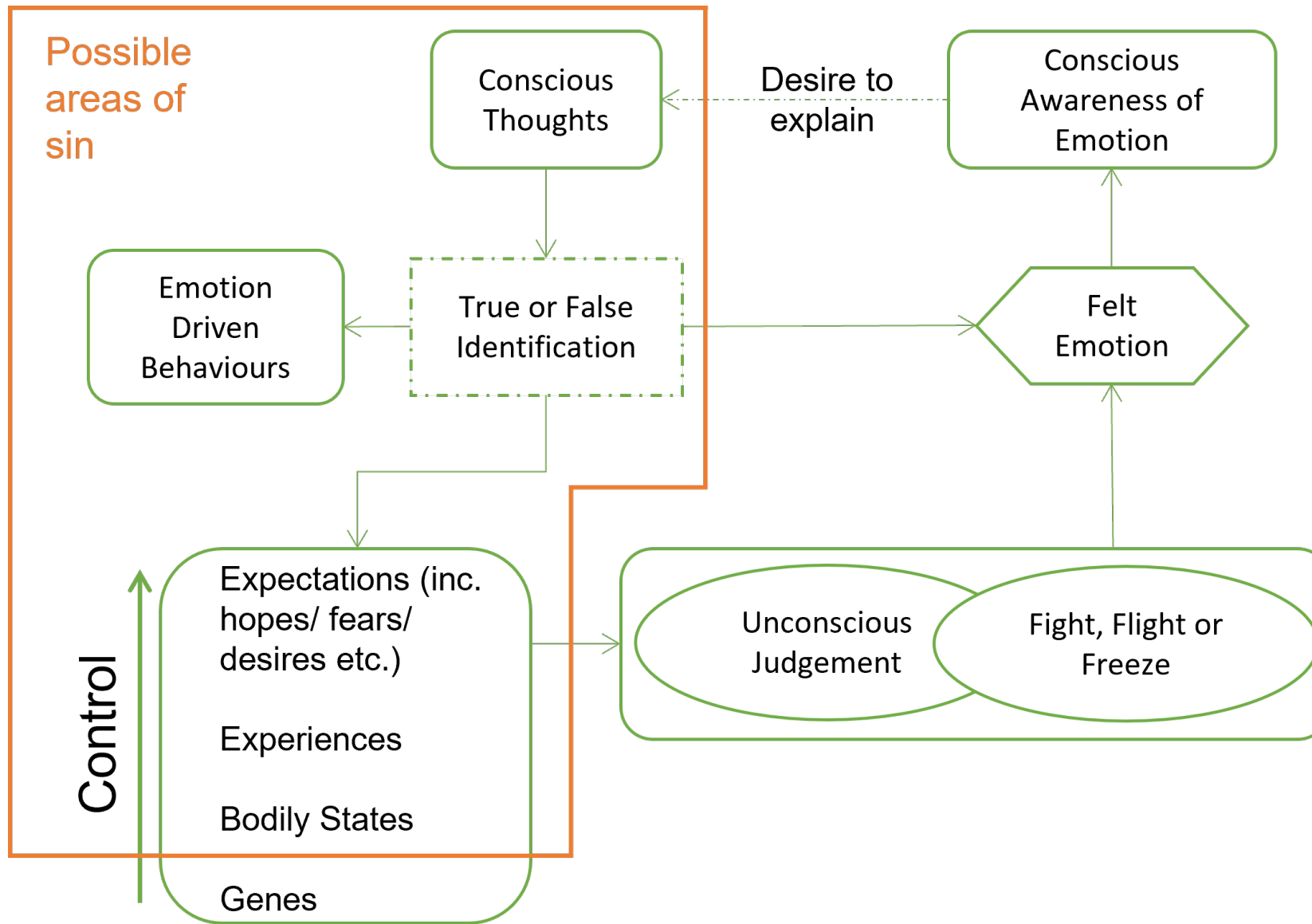


Figure 1: Schema illustrating the interactions at the interface between the body and soul. This figure is edited from LaPine (2020, p. 348), most of the work is his.

Back to Beth (and Harry)

Harry and Beth are a couple in their 30s, Christians, who have been struggling in their marriage.

Beth describes feeling low and having no motivation. She awakens after a restless night much earlier than normal. Immediately her thoughts go to whatever is happening that day and she feels overwhelmed. During the day she is more withdrawn than usual, often sitting staring into space, her eyes welling up with tears. She isn't getting through tasks as she normally would. Her family find the situation frustrating. Beth is a Christian and knows that God is with her but is really struggling to feel the assurance of her salvation. She can't shake off a sense of guilt and when people try to encourage her she just feels worthless and useless. A year ago she suffered a traumatic birth. She is trying a graded return to work. She would say she feels depressed. Some mornings, when she awakens to a crying baby, she just wants to stay in bed.



Back to Beth (and Harry)

Harry, her husband, feels low in mood a lot of the time. He is irritable and gets frustrated at the smallest things. His sleep isn't great either. He can't understand why Beth can't just pick herself up. He tries to reason with her that a Christian shouldn't feel depressed like this because of all the Lord has done for her. But he doesn't seem to get anywhere, gets angry and ends up shouting. He's worn out with the burden of childcare falling his way and feels resentful that God is letting this happen in their lives. He would say that 'Beth isn't the only one' who feels depressed and has 'given up' praying about it.



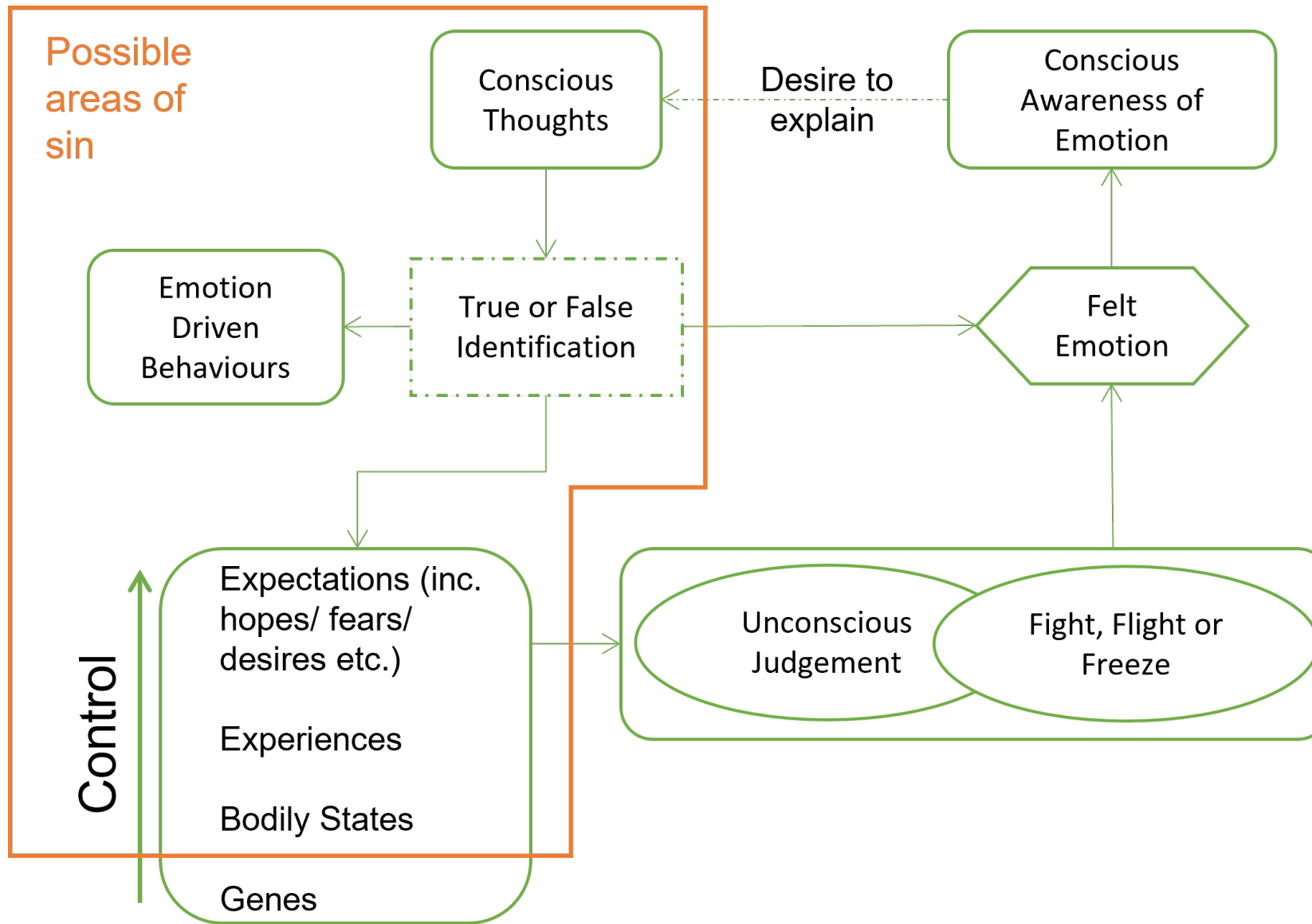


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Question 3

What do you make of Beth and Harry's differing experiences of depression?

In particular, where and how might we identify sinful motives and desires of the heart?



Question 4

Take some of these heart issues and consider how the Lord speaks to each of them. Consider not just the content of what the gospel says, but how you might speak it to each as individuals.

How might you call each to gospel hope and repentance?

