



Lesson 6 — The 10 Dan Algorithm: The Honest Heap

The parable

Michael Jordan got cut from his high school varsity team. Most people would have built a comfortable story about it. He built an honest one instead: *I'm not good enough yet*. Then he ran the loop — find the biggest weakness, convert it to strength, repeat — until there was nothing left to convert. Ten dan. Clean.

The algorithm is simple:

1. **Build a max-heap of your weaknesses**, biggest first.
2. **Extract-max**: take the worst one, work it until it's a strength.
3. **Reheapify**: ask "what's the biggest weakness *now*?" Repeat.

Mathematically trivial. $n \log n$. A first-year CS student could write it before lunch. So why does almost nobody reach 10 Dan?

The hard part isn't the loop. It's the input.

Heap sort assumes the input data is correct. But the ego corrupts the input. Most people never build a max-heap of their weaknesses — they build a max-heap of *what's fun to work on*, run the algorithm flawlessly on it, and wonder why nothing changes. Correct algorithm, wrong data structure. Garbage in, garbage out.

The spiritually hard part is step zero: looking at the true top of the heap every morning and working on *that* instead of the thing you're already good at. Are you really going to work on your weakness — or the thing you enjoy?

The Bible diagnosed this 3,000 years ago

The input is corrupted by default. *"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"* — Jeremiah 17:9. Your self-ranking can't be trusted. The heap you build alone will be sorted by comfort, not by truth.

The dishonest heap, illustrated. *"For anyone who hears the word but does not carry it out is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror, and after observing himself goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like."* — James 1:23–24. He ran the diagnostic, saw the result, and deleted it.

The honest heap-build, commanded. *"Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves."* — 2 Corinthians 13:5. That's the heap-build step, stated as an order. Don't trust the default sort. Audit it.

The audit you can't perform on yourself. *"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns. See if there is any offensive way in me; lead me in the way everlasting."* — Psalm 139:23–24. When the instrument is broken, you don't calibrate it

with itself. You hand it to someone who can see it straight. David outsources the honesty.

The recursion step, priced. *"Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid."* — Proverbs 12:1. Each extract-max hurts. Loving the correction is what keeps the loop running instead of stalling at the first painful reheapify.

The loop, distributed. *"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another."* — Proverbs 27:17. You don't have to run every iteration solo. The right people are co-processors for your heap.

The index piles on — seven more witnesses

Running the lesson's core ideas back through the scripture index returned seven more verses, and they all point at one theme: **the instrument can't calibrate itself.**

Your own judgment is broken by default. *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding."* — Proverbs 3:5. Five words that invalidate every comfortable heap. *"Let no one deceive himself. If any of you thinks he is wise in this age, he should become a fool, so that he may become wise."* — 1 Corinthians 3:18. The fix for a rigged ranking: admit the ranking is rigged. *"The intentions of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out."* — Proverbs 20:5. You can't see into your own deep water alone — you need someone else with a bucket.

So the audit must come from outside you. *"Test me, O LORD, and try me; examine my heart and mind."* — Psalm 26:2. The outsourced audit, second witness to Psalm 139. *"Let us examine and test our ways, and turn back to the LORD."* — Lamentations 3:40. Note the *us* — the audit isn't solo.

And the wise don't just endure the audit — they love it, and it compounds. *"Do not rebuke a mocker, or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man, and he will love you."* — Proverbs 9:8. *"Instruct a wise man, and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man, and he will increase his learning."* — Proverbs 9:9. The loop doesn't just fix — it multiplies.

Simple version: wisdom is the willingness to be measured by something other than yourself — and to love the measuring.

The takeaway

Jordan's superpower was never the recursion. It was the honest input — a heap he refused to let his ego sort. The Bible has been prescribing the same thing for three millennia: you can't sort what you won't face, and you can't face it alone.

Simple version: the algorithm is easy. The honesty is the whole game. *"Search me, O God"* is the audit step most people skip — and it's the reason most heaps stay comfortable, and most people stay where they are.

Every verse quoted in BSB and verified against the scripture index before quoting — the isaiah-54-17 citation gate, applied to the lesson itself.