



**The Equipping for Ministry Phase (Phase III)** covers the following topics: evangelism, beginning apologetics, spiritual warfare, healthy relationships, ministry principles, time management, positional truth and inductive Bible study using Teaching Outlines, Pocket Principles, Guided Discussions, Manuals and Devotions. In this download you will find:

- ◆ *Teaching Outline sample from Healthy Relationships*
- ◆ *Pocket Principle sample from Healthy Relationships*
- ◆ *Guided Discussion sample from Healthy Relationships*
- ◆ *Evangelism Training Manual sample*
- ◆ *Bible Study Manual excerpt*
- ◆ *Devotion excerpt*

## Dealing with Conflict

SUBJECT: Relationships  
THEME: Conflict in Relationships  
PROPOSITION: We need to deal positively with relational conflict.

Introduction: Conflict is part of living in a fallen world. There is no way to avoid it, and in fact, it would not be good to avoid it.

- A. We all need to learn to deal with conflict as part of our personal growth.
- B. Dealing with conflict is difficult.
  - 1. This lesson is designed to help us begin to evaluate how well we handle conflict.
  - 2. This lesson looks at some of the basic principles of conflict resolution.
  - 3. It takes time and practice to learn to apply these principles.

Transition Sentence: We can deal positively with relational conflict by understanding and applying Biblical principles that relate to conflict.

### I. Understanding Biblical Principles

- A. Work toward agreement or oneness (Romans 12:18; Philippians 2:2).
- B. Be careful what you say and how you say it (James 3:3-6; Ephesians 4:29; Proverbs 15:4).
- C. Be sensitive to the needs of others (Ephesians 4:29; Philippians 2:3-4).
- D. Speak the truth in a loving manner (Ephesians 4:15).
  - 1. We cannot change another person. God can, and we can pray to that end.
  - 2. God has called us to ministry, not to manipulation. Ministry and manipulation have different motives.
    - a. The goal of manipulation is to pressure a person to change to meet another's needs. It is selfish and ineffective, and the person being manipulated usually rebels against it.
    - b. The goal of ministry is to tell someone the truth in order to help him. Ministry is not selfish, and the person usually senses love and concern.

- E. Take the log out of your own eye first, before trying to correct another (Matthew 7:1-6).
- F. Be willing to receive correction (Proverbs 12:1; 15:32).
- G. Stay under control when in a conflict (Proverbs 12:18; 14:29; 15:1, 18; 16:32).
- H. Gain wisdom through the counsel of others (Proverbs 15:22; 19:20).
- I. Listen carefully before giving an answer (Proverbs 18:13).

## II. Applying Biblical Principles

- A. Because there are innumerable forms conflict can take, it is impossible to address them all.
- B. The following guidelines will help you work within Biblical parameters.
  - 1. Emotions - If emotions become too intense, take a time out.
    - a. Agree to separate, cool down, pray and try again.
    - b. There are several ways to cool down: do physical activity; write about what is happening; talk with an objective, safe third party.
    - c. Try to use emotion words instead of expressing emotion by yelling or making condemning statements.
  - 2. Communication - Communicate feelings, not judgment.
    - a. Use “I” statements instead of “you” statements.
    - b. Example: "I feel threatened when you raise your voice."
    - c. Another helpful variation is to include your perspective (interpretation or impression) of what happened. By doing this you have acknowledged that it is your interpretation and that it might be wrong. Then the other person has the opportunity to explain his intention.
    - d. Example:  
When I hear you talk very loudly, I understand it to mean that you are  
(objective fact) (my interpretation)  
angry, and I feel threatened.  
(my emotion)
  - 3. Stay on the subject.
    - a. Deal with only one issue at a time. If you have another issue, bring it up at another time.

## Teaching Outline—Equipping for Ministry (Phase III)

- b. Focus on the problem, not the person. It is usually helpful to state what you appreciate about the person, and not just talk about the problem.
  4. Negotiation - When there is disagreement on a decision that needs to be made, it can be helpful to negotiate a solution.
    - a. In a negotiation all parties need to present what they need and want.
    - b. Possible solutions need to be presented that take into account everyone's concerns.
    - c. The goal is to find a win-win solution. It may be that the only way this can happen is through compromise
  5. Consequences - If there has been a serious offense which causes a conflict, it may be necessary to state and carryout a set of consequences in order to effect change.
  6. Ask for help - If you are unable to resolve conflict, you may need the help of an objective third party
  7. Stay current - If conflicts are not dealt with when they arise, not only will they not be resolved, there may eventually be an emotional explosion (Ephesians 4:26).
- C. We also need to be realistic about conflict.
1. It takes two people who are willing to work on and solve problems before there can be success.
  2. Not all battles are worth fighting. Choose your battles wisely.
  3. Spiritual warfare is involved in conflict because Satan is a major player in any conflict (Ephesians 6:12).

Conclusion: By applying biblical principles we can constructively deal with conflict.

### Application Suggestions:

- Think back over the last conflict you had. What did you do well? What areas do you need to improve in?
- Discuss these principles with someone you have a close relationship with and mutually agree that this is the way you want to handle conflicts in the future.

## Dealing With Conflict

Jean made it a point to do everything possible to stay out of conflict. If there was a disagreement, she would give into the other person rather than speak her mind or argue her point of view. If she walked into a room where she felt tension between people, she turned around and walked out. But often Jean was taken advantage of. She felt powerless and worthless and was becoming increasingly isolated. She felt that these negative results were a small price to pay for staying out of any kind of conflict.

One would have to leave this world to avoid conflict. It is inevitable in a fallen world. Not only can we not avoid it, but it would not be good to avoid all conflict. In fact, we need to learn to deal with conflict as part of the growth process. By avoiding conflict, Jean had stopped growing as a person.

Like any other skill, learning to deal effectively with conflict takes time and practice. Fear can be a significant deterrent in this area because dealing with conflict will require taking some risks. We must act in spite of the fear we feel. It is helpful to have a friend who is stronger in these matters to act as a guide, model and overall encourager. As you learn and experiment with healthier ways of handling conflict, you may be energized and empowered as you see the positive results of applying good principles of handling conflict.

This Pocket Principle is designed to help us begin to learn how to handle conflict. It will discuss healthy ways to approach conflict by looking at Biblical principles and how to apply those principles.

### *Understanding Biblical Principles*

The following are nine principles drawn from Scripture which focus on dealing with conflict. They provide a basis for developing healthier relationships and also provide a mirror to look into so we can evaluate how we are doing.

1. **Work toward agreement or oneness.**  
– Romans 12:18; John 17:22-23

*... make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose (Philippians 2:2).*

Paul appeals to the Philippians to work at developing agreement, not just being agreeable. The goal is not just being nice to each other. The goal is finding common ground to build on, and this will require the hard work of dealing with differences.

2. **Be careful what you say and how you say it.** – James 3:3-6; Ephesians 4:29

*The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit (Proverbs 15:4).*

The way we use our tongues, positively or negatively, has an immediate impact on every situation we are in. We can either bless and heal people or hurt and crush them with our tongue. We must exhibit self-control!

**3. Be sensitive to the needs of others.** – Philippians 2:3-4

*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to his needs, that it might benefit those who listen (Ephesians 4:29).*

This does not mean that we cannot be corrective in what we say. But we need to be motivated by what the other person needs and what is best for him when we are corrective.

**4. Speak the truth in a loving manner.** – Ephesians 4:15

People need truth and grace. To confront someone with the truth without grace and love can communicate condemnation. To just give a person grace and never confront him

with the truth may make the person feel good, but leave him blind to important issues in his life. We need to learn how to combine the two in a way that motivates a person to do something about his life without condemning him.

Speaking the truth in love means that we speak the truth because we care about another person without pressuring him to change. Manipulation, which is pressuring another person to change, is selfish and ineffective, and usually the person being manipulated rebels against it. We cannot change another person. Only God can. Instead of manipulating, we need to minister by speaking the truth in love and leaving the results to God. Ministry is not selfish. Usually the person senses love and concern and is more motivated to make the changes suggested.

**5. Take the log out of your own eye first, before trying to correct another person.** Matthew 7:1-6

We cannot expect another person to change when we are not willing to change ourselves. Although we do not need to be perfect before we talk with others about their faults, we do need to acknowledge and be working on our own issues.

**6. Be willing to receive correction–** Proverbs 12:1

*He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever*

*heeds correction gains understanding (Proverbs 15:32).*

We cannot expect someone to receive correction from us if we are not able to receive it. We must be an example of what we want to see in others.

7. **Stay under control when in a conflict.** – Proverbs 12:18; 14:29; 15:18; 16:32

*A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger (Proverbs 15:1).*

It is hard to stay in control when a conflict escalates. When the discussion is getting heated, it is time to take a break and cool down. It is important to inform the other person when you are ready to resume the discussion.

8. **Gain wisdom through the counsel of others.** – Proverbs 19:20

*Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed (Proverbs 15:22).*

No one has 20/20 vision in a conflict. Involving an outside, objective observer is often helpful because he can see things more clearly and give helpful advice. He may give advice to one person or mediate between the two.

9. **Listen carefully before giving an answer.**

*He who answers before listening –that is his folly and shame (Proverbs 18:13).*

It is often helpful to repeat back to the other person the facts and feelings behind what he said before giving a response. This provides the other person with the opportunity to clarify what he said so you can be sure that you heard him right. Then you can give your point of view.

## *Applying Biblical Principles*

Conflict is not only normal, but it may take one of many forms. We cannot cover how to deal with every form of conflict, but we can develop a set of guidelines that give guidance to the process of dealing with conflict in a healthy way. In the last section we tried to understand nine Biblical principles. In this section we are going to focus on applying those principles. Here are seven practical application principles.

1. **Emotions — If emotions become too intense, take a time-out.**

Someone needs to call for the time-out if emotions are too intense, and the other person needs to respect the right of another to take a time-out. Before separating, be sure that there is agreement about when to come back together and resume working on the problem.

There are several ways to cool down during the time-out that are effective. Doing some physical activity, writing about what is happening, talking to an objective, safe third party and/or praying are all good ways to calm down. When you are writing or talking with someone make sure to use emotion words to express yourself. Talk about what you are feeling. Figure out what is going on inside of you. Don't just condemn the other person. When you resume your conversation, you want to communicate how you are feeling.

Sometimes the other person is saying and doing things that are bringing up old feelings in you (from another situation) that have not been resolved but that have nothing to do with the current situation. The feelings from that old situation are being imported into this new situation. Ask yourself, "When have I felt this way before?" It is not fair to blame the other person for these feelings.

**2. Communication — Communicate feelings, not judgment.**

When we are trying to communicate with someone in a conflict situation, we

*When trying to communicate in a conflict situation, communicate feelings, not judgment.*

should communicate feelings, not judgment. To do this, use "I" statements instead of "you" statements. Instead of saying, "You always yell

at me and you are wrong for doing that to me", it would be better to say, "I feel threatened when I hear you raise your voice." The "I" statement is not as provocative as the "you" statement. It shows the other person that what he is doing is having a negative affect on solving the disagreement.

Another helpful variation of the "I" statement is to include your perspective of what happened. Your perspective is your interpretation or impression of what happened. By doing this you have acknowledged that this is your interpretation and that your perception might be wrong. Obviously, your perception is biased and based on limited information. This gives the other person the opportunity to give another perspective, clarify the perspective or explain his intention. For example:

When I hear you talk very loudly, I  
(objective fact)  
understand it to mean that you are angry  
(my interpretation)  
and I feel threatened.  
(my emotion)

**3. Stay on the subject. — Deal with only one issue at a time.**

When you are having an argument, it is easy to bring up other subjects, current or from the past, which are not relevant. This can be a way of avoiding the issue at hand, or it can be a way of badgering a person that produces guilt.

When one issue is dealt with at a time, the possibility of working out a solution is much higher. If there is another issue that needs to be resolved, bring it up at another time rather than sabotaging any hope of resolving the present problem.

Focus on the problem and not the person. It is usually helpful to show that you are talking about the issue and not the person by mentioning what you appreciate about the person in addition to talking about the problem.

#### 4. **Negotiate a solution, if necessary.**

When there is disagreement on a decision that needs to be made, it is often helpful to negotiate a solution. In a negotiation, all parties need to state what they need and want. Next, possible solutions that take into account everyone's concerns should be presented. To get to an agreeable solution everyone usually needs to compromise to some degree. The goal is to find a "win-win" solution, not a "win-lose" or "lose-lose" solution. In some cases, the only solution is for one of the parties to give in. In that case, the losing party should have the opportunity to get their preference at a later date as way of creating fairness.

#### 5. **Carry out consequences, if necessary.**

If there has been a serious offense which causes the conflict, it may be

necessary to state and carry out a set of consequences in order to effect change. For example, if one partner in a marriage has a severe drinking problem that is causing difficulties in the marriage, the other partner needs to first confront the problem. If the person with the problem is unwilling to admit or deal with the problem, then the other partner must provide consequences for the situation that are appropriate.

In a serious situation like this, an appropriate consequence would be a separation in the marriage until the person with the drinking problem has sought help and is effectively dealing with the problem. Certainly there are many different consequences that can be applied in various situations. It is important to choose one that is appropriate to the situation.

#### 6. **Ask for help.**

If you are unable to resolve a conflict, don't be afraid to ask for help. We all need help at times. Be careful who you ask. Ask someone who is neutral, objective and has a proven track record helping people resolve conflicts. You may ask for personal help concerning what you should do, or you may ask someone to mediate between you and the person you are in conflict with. Before a person is called in to mediate, both parties in the conflict need to agree on who that person is and what his role will be.

*Focus on  
the  
problem,  
not the  
person.*

## 7. Stay current.

Staying current means that we need to deal with issues as they come up and not let them fester and become worse. Delaying dealing with issues does not cause them to go away. In fact, it usually causes them to get worse. If you have a water leak in your car and you ignore it, it will only get worse. The car will overheat, and overheating an engine can ruin it. In a similar way, putting off dealing with conflict usually leads to problems that are more difficult to fix than the original problem.

We need to be realistic. We will not be able resolve all conflicts. Since it takes two people who are willing to work on and solve a problem before there can be success, there may be a time when one person is ready to solve a problem but the other person is not. At this point, patience and waiting for God's timing and provision are necessary.

*Successfully dealing with conflict is one of the marks of a person who is growing into maturity in Christ.*

Also, not all battles are worth fighting. We have to weigh the cost. For example, if confronting the boss might lead to being fired, you need to be willing to change jobs. Choose your battles carefully, and be willing to live with the consequences.

We need to remember that spiritual warfare is always a part of conflict (Ephesians 6:12). We should not blame everything on Satan. He is not that powerful. There are legitimate issues that people must face and resolve, but don't underestimate Satan's behind the scenes tactics. He loves to create chaos, divide people, and make bad things worse, especially for Christians. He and his demons lie to, confuse, threaten, and blame believers in order to create problems. There have been many times when there have been problems between my wife and me (Jack) that have immediately dissipated after I have rebuked Satan. Usually these are simple misunderstandings that are easily cleared up.

### *Summary*

Dealing with conflict is never easy or comfortable, but it is extremely important. Not dealing with conflict is not really an option. By understanding and applying Biblical principles we can constructively deal with conflict. Successfully dealing with conflict is one of the marks of a person who is growing into maturity in Christ.

### Application Suggestions:

- Think back over the last conflict you had. What did you do well? What areas do you need to improve in?

- Discuss these principles with someone you have a close relationship with and mutually agree that this is the way you want to handle conflicts in the future.

## DEALING WITH CONFLICT

Leader

(For the Student Version see Table of Contents)

Based on Healthy Relationships Pocket Principle: #8 *Dealing with Conflict*. Students should read these before the Guided Discussion.

### GOAL:

For a disciple to be able to recognize weaknesses he has in handling conflict and to develop a plan to grow in these areas.

### GETTING STARTED:

What is your most likely response if someone yells at you:

<input type="checkbox"/> Yell back	<input type="checkbox"/> Cry	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Be silent (in shock)	<input type="checkbox"/> Express astonishment	
<input type="checkbox"/> Duck and run	<input type="checkbox"/> Ignore it	

Transition Sentence: Conflict usually creates stress and confusion. We can deal positively with conflict by understanding and applying biblical principles.

### STUDYING TOGETHER:

1. Why is it so difficult for us to handle conflict well?
2. In Pocket Principle #8 there are 9 biblical principles mentioned. Each person in the group should choose 1 principle that is especially important to him and be ready to discuss the answer to the following question: What are the consequences if this principle is not applied correctly? (If your group is small, each group member may take more than one principle so that all are covered.)

Principles:

- work toward agreement
- be careful what you say and how you say it
- take the log out of your own eye before trying to correct another;
- be willing to receive correction
- gain wisdom through the counsel of others
- be sensitive to others' needs
- speak the truth in love
- stay under control
- listen carefully before giving an answer

## Guided Discussion—Equipping for Ministry (Phase III)

3. One of the guidelines for applying biblical principles is to communicate feelings, not judgment. It is best to communicate using “I” statements instead of “you” statements and to include your perspective. The following example was used in Pocket Principle #8:

When I hear you talk very loudly, I understand it to mean that you are angry  
(objective fact) (my interpretation)  
and I feel threatened.  
(my emotion)

Why is each part of this statement important?

The objective fact? *It helps to know if the two of you agree on the facts. If there is disagreement at this point, the rest of the communication process is doomed.*

My interpretation? *This helps you and the other person understand how the objective fact was interpreted. Often this is where differences begin. People draw different conclusions or interpretations from the same facts. Knowing the differences in interpretation allows you to begin to understand another person's thinking process and how he arrived at the conclusion he did.*

My emotion? *This helps the other person understand your feelings which are the result of the interpretation you came to. At this point, the emotion will not seem as threatening because the facts and the interpretation have been given and provide a context for it.*

### LOOKING AT REAL LIFE:

1. Read the following brief case studies and then write out a good response to each of them using the example above. Each person should do this on his own, and then read them to the group. There are several “right” answers.
  - a. Wife to husband:  
“You always throw your dirty clothes on the floor instead of in the hamper. And you never pick them up! You just leave them there. Why do you do that? I have better things to do than pick up after you. I’ve had it!!”

Husband’s healthy response:

b. Husband to wife:

“Why didn’t you ask me to stop and get milk? I can’t read your mind. I know I used the milk this morning, but I didn’t know how much you would use during the day. Food around here is your department. You can’t expect me to think of everything!”

Wife’s healthy response:

### **LOOKING AT MY LIFE:**

1. Think back over the last conflict you had with someone. What did you do well? What area do you need to improve in?
2. Design a plan with specific steps that you can take in order to grow in this area. Share this plan with the group and pray for each other, as time allows.

## EVANGELISM AS A PROCESS—PART I

### Session #7

*Note to Leader: This outline contains the major points to be covered in this session. Use the outline to formulate a lecture, or design a discussion, or some other type of interactive lesson.*

GOAL: For a disciple to understand the necessity of seeing evangelism as a process

#### I. Introduction: Past tendencies in evangelism

- A. Much evangelism has been event-oriented.
  - 1. This evangelism is revival-based with emotional pressure for a decision.
  - 2. This method is not as effective now as it once was because there is a greater ideological distance between Christians and non-Christians
  
- B. Most evangelism training is decision-oriented
  - 1. There is aggressive sharing of the gospel with pressure to make a decision now, with no ongoing contact.
  - 2. We call it “raiding party mentality” - Send out a group of evangelists, throw the Gospel at a few people, bag a few and scurry back to the safe haven of the church.
  - 3. But there is a problem: What if the people are not ready to respond to the Gospel? The average believer has heard the gospel seven times before responding.

#### II. Factors that affect how we do evangelism

- A. There have been changes in the values and presuppositions in Western culture.
  - 1. Examples
    - a. People no longer assume that there is a God or that the Christian view of God is correct.
    - b. Christian values are attacked rather than reinforced by society ( e.g. taking “under God” out of the pledge of allegiance).
    - c. The present younger generation is looking for authenticity and genuineness in people.
  
  - 2. Because of these changes, our culture does not prepare the way for our evangelism as it once did. Now, people are generally farther away from Christ than in the past and more skeptical about Christianity.

- B. We sometimes have misperceptions (wrong thinking) about non-believers.
  - 1. Often Christians are afraid to get too close to non-believers for fear of catching their “diseases” (immorality, greed, drugs, materialism, etc.).
    - a. We already have them (“diseases”), but we also have a remedy.
    - b. There is some danger. The question we need to answer is, “Who is influencing whom?” If non-Christians are influencing us more than we are influencing them, then we need to increase our Christian fellowship and decrease the time we are spending with non-Christians.
  - 2. Christians have a tendency to see non-believers as the enemy.
    - a. Non-believers are not the enemy. The spiritual forces of darkness are (Ephesians 6:12). Non-believers are blinded by Satan but are not the enemy (II Corinthians 4:3-4).
    - b. It is generally wise to stay away from truly evil people, but they are the exception and not the rule.
  - 3. Christians sometimes fear that non-believers will reject them. Scripture says to fear God, not man (Proverbs 29:25).
  - 4. The instruction and example of Jesus
    - a. Jesus was willing to involve Himself in people's lives, whether rich or poor, publican or sinner (Mark 2:15-17; Luke 7:34; John 3:1-8).
    - b. Jesus sent us to do as He did (John 20:21).
    - c. He promises to protect us as we obey Him (John 17:15-17).
- C. Sometimes we build barriers, rather than bridges, between ourselves and non-believers.
  - 1. We tend to associate with non-believers only when we are witnessing to them which sends the message that they only have worth if they give a positive response to our message.
  - 2. We sometimes feel it is wrong to do things that bring us into social contact with non-believers, thus limiting our opportunities to share the Gospel.
  - 3. We appear self-righteous if we refuse to socialize with non-believers while, in reality, we struggle with the same types of problems they have.

### III. We need to change our approach to evangelism.

- A. We need to change the way we relate to non-believers.
  - 1. We must spend more time preparing the way for the Gospel by building relationships with non-believers, showing them that we are real and our faith is real.
  - 2. We must build relationships with non-believers, whether or not they are interested in the Gospel (Matthew 22:39).

## Evangelism Training Manual: Teaching Outline

3. Suggestions:
    - a. Treat everyone with respect and kindness.
    - b. Be honest and transparent about struggles.
    - c. Talk about your relationship with Christ in a natural manner when it is appropriate. (E.g. sharing an answer to prayer)
    - d. Put yourself in social situations with non-believers (e.g. a fitness club, in sports, PTA, school functions, a computer class, etc.)
  4. Jesus created interest in spiritual ideas by creating “positive confusion.”
    - a. “Positive confusion” is created when a Christian makes an intriguing statement or question that generates curiosity, opening a door for further conversation about spiritual issues.
    - b. Example: Jesus, in His discussion with Nicodemus, created an opportunity to share the Gospel by saying that one had to be “born again” in order to enter the Kingdom of God (John 3:3).
    - c. Example: Jesus again created an opportunity to share the gospel by saying to the woman at the well, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water” (John 4:10).
- B. We need to understand that salvation is a process.
1. A person comes to Christ over time.
    - a. It is a mistake for Christians to give up on a relationship with a non-believer just because he does not show interest in spiritual things at first.
    - b. There is a point at which a person makes a decision for Christ and becomes a Christian, but there are many important steps that lead up to that decision.
    - c. Having a relationship with a genuine Christian may be an important part of that process.
  2. God often uses crises to speed up the salvation process.
    - a. Every person has a belief system. A crisis often shows that the belief system is inadequate, thus creating a crisis of faith.
    - b. When a person can no longer rely on his belief system, he will often become open to new ways of thinking. If he is in a relationship with a Christian, the crisis may offer the opportunity to introduce the person to Christ.

Summary: To effectively reach our culture for Christ we must understand evangelism as a process. In the next session we will develop this idea further.

## Part I: Inductive Bible Study

### A. Introduction

One of the most valuable skills a Christian can develop is the ability to study the Word of God for himself and to apply it in his own life. The method of inductive Bible study offers such an opportunity. This method is an effective, practical way of arriving at the meaning and application of a Bible passage. To make it easy to follow, a numbered guide has been designed and supplied for you at the back of this booklet. When you have used this method with a few passages of Scripture, you will “catch onto” the method and will be able to use the guide easily without the instructions.

What is inductive Bible study? The word “inductive” refers to the way we process information and come to conclusions. When we think inductively we begin with specific facts and details and then draw general conclusions (interpretations and application) from those details. When we apply this type of thinking to Bible study, we observe the facts of a passage and then derive general principles from those facts. This involves studying the background of the passage, considering the context, understanding the words and grammar, and grasping the author’s intention.

This study method may be used for private devotions, for a leader’s preparation of a Bible study, for a small group’s study time together, or for group members’ individual preparation before a meeting. A group leader may wish to supplement the study with his own lecture or discussion questions. Inductive studies are especially effective in groups where people can share their insights, research and application, and where leaders can hold members accountable for completing the study. It is recommended that a group be kept to twelve people or less (See *A Small Group Manual*, WDA).

Inductive Bible study skills are taught in Phase Three of the five phase discipleship growth process. Thus, a disciple can study biblical truths helpful at this stage while learning a practical Bible study skill that will last a lifetime. We suggest beginning with the passages that contain Phase Three truths (e.g. Romans 1-8) and then moving to passage of your own choosing. A well-outlined study bible can be helpful. The New International Version (published by Zondervan) has excellent paragraph and idea divisions.

A word about commentaries needs to be added here. While commentaries (an in depth study of scripture) are useful tools, it is important for the bible student to do his own study of a passage before reading a commentary. This encourages the student to do the mentally and spiritually challenging work of studying and allows the Holy Spirit to reveal truth directly to the student. After a study is complete, it can be helpful to read several commentaries to investigate different viewpoints.

Following are instructions about how to do an inductive study. (See sample guide at the back of this booklet.) Studies on Acts 17:22-31 (historical passage) and Acts 8:26-40 (teaching passage) are given as samples at the back of this booklet. A suggestion for learning this skill is to follow the instructions and fill-in a blank Inductive Bible Study Guide on these passages. Then, after completing each numbered section in the guide, compare your completed guide with the sample. Your answers will not be exactly like the ones in the samples. If hundreds of different people did this study, no two would do it exactly the same way. But many of the main points should be similar.

As you begin your study, write the passage reference in the upper right-hand corner of the guide. Take time to pray and ask God to teach you the truths of the passage and ask the Holy Spirit to apply them to your life. Remember, "The thought of God no one knows except the Spirit of God" (I Corinthians 2:10,11).

## *DEVOTIONS FOR EQUIPPING FOR MINISTRY*

At this point in your Christian growth you are ready to accept the challenge of learning ministry skills and principles. Your personal relationship with God continues to be the single most important ingredient in your Christian life, and for this reason we are suggesting specific passages for you to focus on in your personal devotional time. The selected passages touch on and reinforce some of the themes of Phase III. The books to study are: Luke, Acts, Galatians, Ruth, Joshua and Judges.

In Laying Foundations (Phase II) we provided background information for the books studied as well as specific questions for the passages. Now, you are able to do those tasks for yourself, remembering to **observe, interpret and apply**, with **application of the Word being the primary goal**. In Phase III you will learn more bible study skills to help you delve into Scripture even more deeply. As before, each book is broken down into daily readings (5/week). The 6th day will be a Psalm, and the 7<sup>th</sup> day is a catch-up or review day.

### **Suggested Order to Study Books:**

Luke  
Acts  
Galatians  
Ruth  
Joshua  
Judges