

CRU PRESS

GREEN



CONNECTIONS INVESTIGATIVE BIBLE STUDY

THE CONNECTIONS BIBLE STUDY SERIES

The purpose of the Connections study is to provide students with an opportunity to be involved in a five week Bible study series emphasizing the relevance of scripture in every day life and issues, in the context of warm, attractive Christian relationships.

As an investigative Bible Study, content is for a mixed audience of believers and non-believers. This study is ideal for the start of the school year, before more committed discipleship groups have formed, and while you still gathering new students and freshmen.

Content:

Purpose, Strategy and Agenda with Signup Sheet

Parable Of The Soils | Leader's Guide

Mirror, Mirror, On the Wall | Leader's Guide

Under Pressure | Leader's Guide

That's The Power of Love | Leader's Guide

Message in a Bottle | Leader's Guide

Connection Bible Study

L-Intro

Purpose, Strategy, and Agenda

Purpose

To provide students with an opportunity to be involved in a five week Bible study series emphasizing the relevance of scripture in every day life and issues, in the context of warm, attractive Christian relationships. Ultimately our hope is that these students will not only begin to relate Biblical wisdom to life, but that they will become committed disciples of Jesus Christ. This will create growth in the movement and help to find potential leadership so the ministry can develop further.

Means

- This will be accomplished using Bible Studies on campus held on a common night at a common time.
- Studies should be led by students or lay people who are personally and spiritually mature. It will be their responsibility to befriend the students and be involved in sharing Christ with them. This is essential.
- Each student should be given a personal invitation to attend any retreat your campus will attend during the year.
- The leader should commit themselves to pray and prepare for the lesson at least one hour per week.

Getting Students to Come

First Meeting: Announce “The Connection” Bible study at the first planning meeting or weekly meeting. Tell people a little about the study, the exact location, time, and the leaders name and phone number. Also pass around a sign-up sheet to get the name, address and phone number of those who are interested.

Survey Contacts: Call or go by and see all students who expressed an interest in a Bible study or spiritual things on the survey.

Word of Mouth: The key to publicity will be to personally invite every student you meet.

Publicity: Put up attractive posters in all living areas as well as high traffic areas on campus.

Leave Notes: Call and leave notes on doors or in hallways the night before each study with a provocative question relating to the study.

The Connection Bible Study

Sign-up Sheet

Name Address (Dorm Room) Phone

Parable of the Soils

Leader's Guide

L1

Connection Bible Study

As with all beginning Bible studies, you will want to have frequent contact with the members to help them remember to come. Use the phone and/or the thought-provoking note on their door.

Objectives

- Give group members a chance to meet each other and you.
- Create positive attitudes about this Bible study.
- Lead the study so that will make them come back to learn more.
- Challenge them (through the Parable of the Soils) to teachability.

Lesson Plan

1. When everyone has arrived, go around and tell names, hometown, and dorm. You can have fun with this— see if someone can rattle off all the names or hometowns.
2. As an ice-breaker, play “Two Truths and a Lie.”
Directions: Each person thinks of two truths (obviously unique or unusual) things about themselves. They also think of one untrue thing. Then each person tells them and the group guesses which is not true.
3. The leader should share his/her testimony so that the group members can get to know him/her better.
4. Share the purposes of the group with them:
 - To see how Christianity and the Bible relate to every day lives.
 - To get to know others who have an interest in the Bible.
 - To learn and have a good time!!
5. Share the topics to be covered:
 - The Parable of the Soils (this week)
 - If They Could See Me Now (self-esteem topic)
 - The Heat Is On (anxiety and worries)
 - Looking For Love In All The Wrong Places (relationships)
 - How Will I Know? (God's will)
6. Say, “Now we want to leave with a little challenge—this study will be a good foundation to build on for the rest of your life.” Go to the “Parable of the Soils” Bible study.

Key Tip

It is *imperative* that you be very familiar with the parable so that it comes across properly. For example, it would be easy to miss the fact that the condition of man's heart (the different soils) is the *whole point* of this parable. Everything else (the same seed, the same birds flying around, etc.) is constant; the soil type is the variable.

7. Refreshments (if possible)

Connection Bible Study

1

Parable of the Soils

Luke 8:4-8, 11-15

1. What is represented by ...
 - the seed?
 - the soil?
 - the bird?
2. From verse 12, rephrase what soil #1 is.
 - Read 1 Peter 5:8
 - How and what does Satan do?
 - Why is he able to steal the seeds sown on the footpath type soil?
3. From verse 13, what is soil #2 in your own words?
 - What things tempt us to turn away from God?
 - Notice that these people have joy over God's Word. What don't they have?
 - Why aren't feelings enough?
 - What could have prevented their falling away?
4. From verse 14, rephrase what soil #3 is.
 - What chokes their spiritual life?
 - What is the outcome?
 - What worries do you face as a college student?
5. From verse 15, what is soil #4 in your own words?
 - What does it mean to hold fast the word?
 - How can you do this?
 - What is an honest and good heart?

Mirror, Mirror, On the Wall

Leaders Guide

L2

Connection Bible Study

Objective

The objective of this lesson is to help students develop a healthy self-image based upon God's acceptance of them rather than upon their performance. A self-image based upon performance is continually asking, "How do I measure up in my looks, physical ability, wealth, status, intelligence, spirituality, success, or anything?" This is why it fails. God's love and acceptance are unconditional. Note that God's acceptance does not mean that we are stagnant ("God accepts me just as I am, so I don't think I'll even try to improve"). Instead, it fosters security in the midst of our growth process.

Lesson Plan

1. You could begin with some sharing from the content of last week's lesson, if you think they feel "at home" enough in the group to open up about what they learned. Otherwise, you can use your own sharing idea, or go on to #2 after a brief time of interaction.
2. Have two different people read the scenarios out loud to the group. Ask the question printed in the members sheets, "How does it make you feel..."
3. **Read** "Our society teaches us..." Break into pairs for the brainstorming exercise, then regroup and have members share their observations. You can ask why they came up with those.
4. **Read**, "It's nice to have good looks...". Comment that this exercise is not meant to depress them, but to help identify ways we fall into the trap of comparison. Next, have them do the rating exercise individually. After they have finished, ask, "Did you find some of those were true of you? That's because society tells us that if we don't measure up we're unacceptable. Now let's look at what God says about our value."
5. **Read**, "Although society demands...". Have four members each read a verse from Psalm 139:13-16. Answer #1 and #2 as a group. Answer #3 and #4 individually. Answer #5 as a group. Finally, answer #6 individually, and then have the group share their answers.
6. **Action Point:** Give out 35 cards and have each person write out Psalm 139:14 on one side. Ask them to post it on their mirror or desk. Close in prayer and ask that all would understand God's acceptance and thus be able to accept themselves.

Connection Bible Study

2

Mirror, Mirror, On the Wall

Scenario 1

Felicia had just moved into Fletcher Hall from Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. She was leaving behind cheerleading, choir, student government, and lots of friends. These activities had left her feeling confident and excited about entering a new college. But as she was sitting in her dorm room flipping through her photo album, reality hit home. Things were different here, really different!

Just then Betty walked in from next door with grand news of her first invitation to go to Central City with Jerry. No sooner had Betty left than in pranced Patty wanting to borrow a tennis racket for her big match that afternoon. Throughout all of this Robin sat in the corner diligently preparing for her first class.

A darkening cloud soon began to form over Felicia's bright concept of herself. Why don't I already have a date like Betty? Is there something wrong with my personality, my looks? Maybe if I could play tennis as well as Patty then I'd have more friends. And oh, do I need to be studying already? I do want to make good grades like Robin.

Scenario 2

Freddie left his room in Broward to work out in the weight room. On the way there he saw Bill and Missy ride by, complete with their new collegiate attire of shorts, Greek jerseys, and Vuarnet shades. As he neared the gym he passed the basketball courts where "Sky" was going up for a slam dunk. Entering the gym, he immediately saw Billy flexing his triceps and biceps.

Freddie began to question this thing called college life. "Back at Perry all we wore were blue jeans, and how did Bill get up enough nerve to ask Missy out? And what's so special about this basketball stuff? Football was our game back home. I'm horrible at basketball. And, Where in the world did guys like Billy come from? My arms look like beanpoles compared to his..."

- 1. How does it make you feel when, like Felicia and Freddie, you think you don't measure up?**
- 2. Our society teaches us to rate ourselves and others based on physical appearance, wealth and status, intelligence, and success. Brainstorm several TV characters who model "having it all" in each of these areas:**

physical appearance -
wealth and status -
intelligence -
success -

2

Connection Bible Study

It's nice to have good looks, money, status, brains, and success. But if our self-acceptance is based only on these qualities, we're bound to feel a sense of failure sooner or later. The following statements will help you discover how much of your self-esteem is based on this "performance system".

Rate yourself on each of the following statements using this scale:

- | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Always | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> |

Although society demands that we play by its "performance system" to feel good about ourselves, God loves and accepts us just as we are.

Turn to Psalm 139:13-16

1. Why is it significant that God is the One who made you?

2. How does this relate to areas of your life that you don't like?

2

Connection Bible Study

3. List three things you like about yourself and three things you don't like.

Like:

- a.
- b.
- c.

Don't Like:

- a.
- b.
- c.

4. According to verse 14, what should your attitude be toward all these things you listed?

5. What do you know about God's character that helps you to be thankful even for the things you don't like?

6. Rephrase verse 16 in your own words:

Connection Bible Study

L3

Under Pressure

Leaders Guide

Objectives

1. Pinpoint the anxiety-producing areas.
2. Understand that worry results from trusting in humans (self or others) rather than in God.
3. Understand the solution to worry is prayer and trust in God.
4. Apply this solution to one area of concern.

Note: It is difficult for many to believe that God *never* wants us to worry and that we don't have to. This is a revolutionary concept which may take some extra attention in the Bible study.

Lesson Plan

1. Open with some sharing, centered upon last week's lesson.
2. **Read the opening paragraph.** Have each member rank his top five areas of anxiety silently on his sheet, then ask for volunteers to share their top five. If none of the members want to, share your responses and proceed to the next point.
3. Do the "brainstorm" exercise as a group.
Possible answers:
 - "we don't know an easy solution"
 - "lack of confidence in whatever we're trusting in"
 - "insecure in ourselves and our own ability"
 - "unsure of the future"
 - "not prepared to handle what's ahead or the fear of it"
 - "fear of the unknown"
 - "fear of what others think"
4. **Read the next paragraph**, "When you were three..", and the instructions regarding the book of Jeremiah. Do this exercise as a group. Several of these characteristics overlap in these verses. The main point is to come up with God's love, omnipotence, and omniscience (but don't use these fancy words).
5. **Read**, "These can be boiled down...", and ask and discuss the three questions. Get them to really think about these.

Example: "If God knew everything and was all-powerful, but didn't love me, I'd be really scared of Him. I wouldn't know what He was going to do to me. I'd probably be terrified every time I sinned because without His love, He might punish me horribly. I could definitely never trust an unloving God's will for me..."

L3

Connection Bible Study

6. Individually complete the unfinished sentence. Hopefully they should come up with an attitude of complete trust instead of worry, because of His character. Ask for volunteers to share their answer.

7. **Background on Philippians chapter 4:**

The book of Philippians is a letter written by the apostle Paul while he was imprisoned in Rome for preaching the gospel. He wrote the Christians in the church he had helped start 10 years earlier in Philippi.

At this point in his life, Paul had been beaten, shipwrecked, jailed, persecuted, ostracized, pressured, etc. (See his own description in 2 Cor. 11:3–27). As he wrote the letter he faced a possible death sentence. Obviously, Paul himself had plenty of opportunities to worry and complain. But instead, he rejoiced, and instructed us also to not worry about anything.

8. Have someone read Philippians 4:6,7 aloud, then answer the questions as a group.

Note: For question #4, the important point is that the peace of God is a *supernatural* result. For question #5, the point is that God loves us, and you don't want anyone you love to worry. Also, worry is from a lack of *faith*, and God wants us to trust Him.

9. **Action Point:** Give out 35 cards and ask each person to copy Philippians 4:6,7 on it. Next have them write out the sentence listed on their sheets. After that have them write *their* #1 worry from the first exercise in this lesson.
10. Have someone close in prayer.

Connection Bible Study

3

Under Pressure

1. **Even the most confident person can experience anxiety when adjusting to new and unfamiliar circumstances. Rank the top five areas below in which you experience anxiety.**

grades	dates
popularity	future plans
money	roommate relations
health of family member	fraternity/sorority rush
choice of a major	personal health
physical appearance	clothes
homesickness	changing relationship with parents
other	

2. **As a group, brainstorm five reasons why we worry about these things.**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

When you were three years old, you had plenty of needs, but you lived in relative security and peace because you trusted your parents to provide for you. As you matured, not only did your needs become more complex, but you also began to realize that no human being, neither your parents nor yourself, could guarantee the future. The result is worry.

But this doesn't have to be the case. By understanding the character of God and trusting in Him like a little child, worry is replaced by peace.

3. Turn to the book of Jeremiah. From the following verses list characteristics of God that brought Jeremiah peace in the midst of difficulties.

Jeremiah 29:11

Jeremiah 31:3

Jeremiah 51:15

Connection Bible Study

3

These can be boiled down to three important truths about God's character. He is completely loving, completely powerful, and completely knowledgeable.

4. **How would you feel about God if He:**
 1. Knew everything and was all-powerful, but didn't love you?
 2. Loved you and knew everything, but was not all-powerful?
 3. Was all-powerful and loved you, but didn't know everything?
 5. **Complete this sentence on your own: "because God is loving, powerful and knowledgeable, I"**
-

Turn to Philippians 4:6,7

1. **What does Paul say about worry?**
2. **Do you think he 's being unrealistic?**
3. **Instead of being anxious, what are we to do?**

How?

What will the result be?

4. **What 's the difference between positive thinking and "the peace of God?"**
5. **Why do you think it matters to God whether or not we worry?**

Action Point

Because God loves me totally, knows everything, and can do anything, I don't worry about _____ anymore.

That's The Power of Love

Leader's Guide

L4

Connection Bible Study

Objective

To understand the difference between self-centered “love” and real Biblical love.

Lesson Plan

1. Divide the group into pairs. Give each pair a copy of one of the three scenarios. (There may be several pairs doing the same scenario, that's fine, just make sure that all three scenarios are used). Instruct them to decide how they would **actually** respond in that situation, not what they think **you** would want them to say!
2. After discussing the scenarios, read the first paragraph aloud (“all of us find...”). Have everyone turn to 1 Corinthians 13. Have someone read verses 4–8 aloud. Individually do the chart. Have one person share what they have for the “Love is” side, and another do the “Love is not” side. Ask if anyone got anything else.
3. Ask and discuss the next question (“Do you see a general...”). Let them discuss the idea some. You don't want a simple repeating of the **characteristics** which are listed, but the underlying principle (example, “others-centeredness” is key). A key point for you to notice is that love is sacrificial (notice that this description of love **assumes** there is offense and conflict, not a perfect or idealistic life, or else you wouldn't need patience, kindness, not noticing a wrong done, etc). Study and pray over 1 Corinthians 13 in preparation for the lesson.
4. Have the group come up with a definition of Biblical love (remember, not just a re-stating of characteristics). Have them write what they come up with in the space provided. When they've had a shot at it, suggest this definition for their consideration: “Love is choosing to say or do whatever brings the most good to the other person.”
5. You can ask if this seems to be an adequate definition of 1 Corinthians 13 love. Discuss how this love differs from popular definitions (as in songs, etc). Point out the role of feelings in Biblical love (none). (They may write this definition at the bottom of the page).
6. As a group, study Matthew 22:36–39 (have one person read it aloud). Ask whom we are to love? Answers: God, neighbor, yourself.
7. Expand on the issue of your neighbor with questions like: “Who is your neighbor?” (Luke 10:29–37 spells out that it is not an issue of ethnic origin, personal knowledge of the person, or even (especially) liking the individual; Jews and Samaritans hated each other). Everybody is your neighbor.

L4

Connection
Bible Study

8. In the space below the numeral three, have them brainstorm and list who their neighbor is. If they need help, have someone look up Matthew 5:43, 44 (enemies), 1 John 4:21 (“brother”), etc.

Have them refer back to the scenarios, and using the definition of Biblical love, discuss what the *most loving* response would be.

The following are some suggestions for your preparation. Don't offer these thoughts until you help them arrive at a suitable loving response of their own.

The “SLOB” Scenario

Attitude is the key. As 1 Corinthians 13 says, you must be patient and kind. Anything less would not be real love. Here is one possible course of action. Begin cleaning up the room yourself—quietly, not with the attitude of “I’ll wake that jerk up!” The scenario didn’t mention whether or not you’d ever discussed the issue of how neat to keep the room (and it is a joint decision!), and that’s definitely a starting point. When he/she wakes up, patiently discuss this issue. Discuss your apparent differences and arrive at some solution. Note, that if he never changes, that’s *his* responsibility. It’s your responsibility to love unconditionally.

The “MOM” Scenario

First of all, choose not to react to the pressure of “if you loved us you’d...”

Decide

that you’re willing to do whatever’s most loving for all involved. Discuss the situation calmly— is there any other option for going to the beach? Is there another opportunity for you to go home soon? Tell her that you’re willing to come home now, but this seems to be your last chance to go to the beach this season. Would the best demonstration of love for her be going home? Remember, she does deserve your respect and consideration, she’s changed plenty of her plans throughout the years as she raised you.

The “FLAME” Scenario

This requires a cool head as well. Choose not to think of your own needs first, or of

your hurt feelings. Choose not to assume anything; you don’t *know* who the other person is for sure. And even if you’re being mistreated, love doesn’t consider a wrong done. Choose to discuss the incident later—with patience and kindness. You have the responsibility of discussing it and not just burying the issue if you’re dating steadily. After dealing with your emotions, calmly phone and tell them something’s on your mind and you’d like to get together and talk. Tell them in person what you saw and that you thought your relationship was pretty steady. Figure out together where things stand.

L4

Connection Bible Study

Action Point

Give each member a 35 card and ask them to write the Biblical definition of love on it. Next, ask them to flip it over and write the name of someone they have difficulty loving. Have them also write down one thing they can do or say this week for that person's good. Suggestions: Write them an encouraging letter; go to dinner together; apologize for a time you hurt them; give them a genuine compliment. Have them act upon it this week.

Close in prayer, praying for the action points.

Scenarios

The Slob. Your roommate is a slob. You like to have things look orderly. After spending all morning cleaning up, you come back from class to find your roommate sprawled on the bed. Books, dirty clothes, and leftovers from lunch litter the room. How do you respond?

Mom. Your new friends are going to the beach. It's your last chance this season and you can't wait. But you haven't been home yet this semester. Your mom calls up and says, "If you really loved us, you'd come home this weekend." How do you respond?

The Significant Other. You met a wonderful person at orientation and have been going out with him/her ever since. One day as you pass by the Student Union on your way back from class, you see your new Significant Other sitting in the sun, holding hands and talking intimately to someone else. How do you respond?

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Connection Bible Study

4

That's The Power of Love

1. Discuss the three scenarios.

All of us find ourselves in sticky situations like these. It's often hard to know the best way to respond. The Bible says that love is the key. Let's look at 1 Corinthians 13 to see exactly what real love is.

2. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. List below, phrases describing what love is and is not.

Love is...

Love is not...

3. Do you see a general principle underlying all these characteristics?

4. How can we define Biblical love?

5. Read Matthew 22:36 –39. Whom are we to love?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

6. Applying Biblical Love

Biblical response to the "Slob" Scenario

4

Connection Bible Study

Biblical response to the “Mom” scenario

Biblical response to the “Significant Other” scenario

Message in a Bottle

Leader's Guide

L5

Connection Bible Study

Objectives

1. To dispel any misconceptions they may have regarding God's will.
2. Give Biblical principles for understanding God's will.

Lesson Plan

1. Open with a time of sharing about last week's Action Point.
2. Have three different people read the scenarios, and then you read the summary paragraph.
3. Do all the next six points together as a group. Some things you'll want to note on each of the points are:
 - a Romans 12:1–2 is full of religious terms that might not be familiar, such as “present your body,” etc. The main point is *yielding to the Lordship of Christ*. George Mueller, a Christian leader of the last century, said that 95% of knowing God's will is yielding to it, whatever it is.
 - b Ask, “How does the Bible fit in with our decision-making?” They should come up with:
 - A decision cannot be God's will if it conflicts with what's already written in His word, regardless of how appealing it seems. (For example: sex before marriage.)
 - There are some principles in the Bible that may apply to your particular situation. (For example: it's a clear principle that God wants us to love Him with all our heart, so when making a decision you should consider which of your options will help you love God more.)
 - Pray. Ask in faith for wisdom.
 - You will need to briefly explain the “Sound-mind Principle” (2 Timothy 1:7 in the KJV states it best. Thoroughly familiarize yourself with what the “How Do I Know What God Wants Me To Do” says about it).
 - There are two extremes which we can fall into with respect to counsel of mature Christians. One is ***being unteachable***, refusal to consider others' counsel. The other is ***total dependence on others' counsel***, rather than seeking God and His word. The latter can even be like flaking out—not wanting to be responsible for finding out and doing God's will.
 - Repeated promptings of the Holy Spirit. This is the most subjective principle listed. Sometimes “repeated prompting” may be our own selfish desires. However, God does use the inner prompting of His still, small voice to lead us. You must evaluate these feelings by the more objective means listed above.

L5

Connection Bible Study

Note: The principles above are listed in descending order, from most objective to most subjective. All are useful, but must be subordinated to the most objective ones. Also note that circumstances (the “closed door/open door” policy) is not listed here as a principle. See the “How Do I Know What God Wants Me To Do” for an explanation. “Experiencing God’s peace” isn’t here either; for even the most mature Christians may use it as a cover-up for the desire to do what is comfortable.

- 4 Restate these principles succinctly with the use of the six questions at the bottom of the page as a review of the lesson.

Action Point

Ask each member to think of a decision he/she is faced with, or will be faced with soon. Give them all copy of the “How Do I Know What God Wants Me To Do”, asking them to read it and use it in their decision-making process. Close with an appropriate prayer.

How Do I Know What God Wants Me to Do?

Students often ask, “What does God want me to do? What’s His will for my life?” Or perhaps you’ve asked similar questions that relate to where you are at in life, such as, *What should I major in? Where should I live? Who should I date? What should I do with my summer?*

It would be easier for us if God would just shine a big spiritual flashlight on the right path we should take every time we are faced with a decision. But, God has given us a better way to find His will and to guide us in life. By applying the following principles, we can be assured that we are following God, and we’ll get to know Him in a much deeper, personal way.

We make decisions with our mind—that’s the way God created us. He has also given us His Holy Spirit to transform our minds, according to Romans 12:1–2:

“Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed to the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

To know God’s will, is first, to know God and to continually be in a process of allowing him to transform your mind by His Holy Spirit.

God created you as a unique individual—your personality, training, talents, and many other things make you the way you are. You will likely discover many ways in which you can use your gifts and talents. Try this exercise to help you determine how and where God may be leading you and how you can find His will for your life:

Take a sheet of paper and list ways your life can be used to accomplish the most for the glory of God. List the pros and cons of each opportunity. Where or how can your life accomplish the most in continuing God’s ministry of “seeking and saving the lost”? Yielding your life to Christ and allowing your mind to be transformed by the Holy Spirit can assure you that God will be leading you in the right direction.

Finding and following God’s will is impossible unless certain factors are true of your experience. First, ask yourself, “Is there any unconfessed sin in my life?” Second, ask, “Is my life dedicated to Christ and filled with His Holy Spirit?” Third, walk in the Spirit, placing your trust in Him and obeying God through faith.

This writing is not intended to be an exhaustive study of finding God's will for your life. There are other closely related principles to consider: God's will is revealed in (1) the authority of Scripture, (2) providential circumstances, (3) conviction based upon reason, and (4) impressions of the Holy Spirit upon our minds. Impressions by the Holy Spirit can easily be misunderstood, so it might be to your benefit to seek the advice of a mature believer to help you sort out your experiences.

Following the principles God has revealed in His Word will help you discern His will and allow you to grow deeper in your relationship with Him as you trust Him with your life and the decisions you make.

5

Connection Bible Study

Message in a Bottle

- An accounting student is working on a problem which has only one specific solution. In order to find the correct answer, he knows that a great deal of research must be done. He consults dozens of accounting reference books and gets advice from other students.
- A lawyer, before he represents his client, must do hours of research into past cases and rulings to find any precedents which can be used to base future decisions on.
- A freshman guy asking a girl out for the first time often does research too! He has his eye on her, is interested in where she is from, and wants to talk to her friends to find out if she's interested or already has a boyfriend.

In these and many other areas of life we seek evidence, do research, and work diligently to find answers. But when it comes to knowing God's will, we often stand by frustrated, waiting for it to hit us like a bolt of lightning. In this lesson we will explore Biblical principles which we can begin using to understand God's will.

1. From the verses listed below, discuss what principle for determining God's will is revealed.

- a. Luke 9:23, Romans 12:1,2
- b. Psalm 119:130, 2 Timothy 3:16
- c. James 1:5-7
- d. 2 Timothy 1:7, 1 Corinthians 2:16
- e. Proverbs 15:22
- f. Romans 8:14, Psalm 32:8, Isaiah 42:16

2. These principles can be rewritten as questions to help you determine God's will when you face a decision.

1. Am I totally yielded and willing to do *whatever* God wants me to?
2. Do any of my options conflict with clear commands in the Bible?
3. Have I prayed about it and trusted God for wisdom?
4. As I use my yielded, sound mind, which option seems to be God's will?
5. What is the counsel of mature Christians who know me?
6. How do I sense God repeatedly prompting me inside?