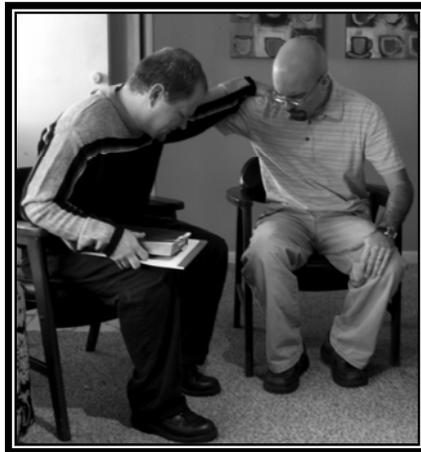


Sharpening Your Focus on HIV/AIDS

A Bible Study



— Facilitator's Guide —

*Created by the
Global AIDS Partnership*

Notes for Facilitators

Sharpening Your Focus is designed to be a group Bible study, but it may also be useful as a personal study.

As a facilitator, your main role is to encourage group participation and to keep the discussion focused on the topic. You do not have to be an expert on HIV/AIDS or the Bible — just someone who is willing to lead this study. Good facilitators don't have all the answers — rather, they draw out the answers from the group itself. Moreover, they challenge and inspire group members to apply these truths in their lives.

This Facilitator's Guide consists of eight lessons, designed to take approximately one hour each. This may vary depending on the amount of discussion and group dynamics. Each lesson is arranged in two columns. The left-hand column contains the questions for group discussion. The right-hand column provides information and/or scripture references relevant to the question. The information provided is not considered to be the only correct answer nor necessarily all encompassing, but it does identify some key points for the facilitator to point out to the group. An accompanying study guide for group participants is also available.

Sharpening Your Focus is not designed to provide basic facts about the transmission and symptoms of HIV/AIDS. This study presumes that participants will have prior knowledge of basic AIDS facts. If not, GAP Module I (*HIV/AIDS Awareness*) is available from HealthCare Ministries to provide basic facts prior to initiating this Bible study.

This study also presumes that participants have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. If they have not, a terrific web site that explains how to do so is found at <http://followchrist.ag.org>.

This study guide has been developed by members of the Global AIDS Partnership (GAP). GAP is a ministry of HealthCare Ministries, the medical missions outreach of U.S. Assemblies of God World Missions. GAP includes missionaries representing different regions of the world as well as health professionals from HealthCare Ministries.

Sharpening Your Focus on HIV/AIDS: A Bible Study

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— Lesson 1 —

HIV AIDS: What's it to me?

<p>Starter: Optional knowledge tests on HIV/AIDS.</p> <p>Most of us know the facts about HIV/AIDS. It's the real life issues that are much harder to respond to. The real test is developing a scriptural perspective and response to the complex issues that we will be discussing in the weeks to come.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What's the big deal about AIDS?2. Do we have a moral imperative to respond to a crisis of this magnitude? Why or why not? Who does this apply to?3. Is there a sense of urgency concerning our response to HIV/AIDS?<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ In general? (Or, in the general population?)◆ In the Church?◆ In ourselves?	<p>See Appendix A for a True/False test on HIV/AIDS, and Appendix B for AIDS Testing Survey.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The statistics on HIV/AIDS are impossible to comprehend. 8000 people die <i>every day</i> from AIDS. Every 6.4 seconds, someone is infected with HIV (World Health Organization statistics). Treatment with antiretroviral medications (ART) does not cure AIDS, but has greatly extended the life expectancy of people living with HIV/AIDS in the US and some industrialized countries. However, only around 2 percent of people living with HIV/AIDS are receiving ARTs (UNAIDS, <i>Progress on Global Access to ART</i>, June 2005).2. In promoting World AIDS Day in 2003, President Bush stated that "fighting HIV/AIDS is not only a great challenge but also a moral imperative for those who believe in the value and dignity of every human life."<p>We are commanded to "love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus gave us the story of the Good Samaritan to show us what it really means to love our neighbors (Luke 10:25–37). "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man in need?" asked Jesus at the end of the story. "The one who had mercy on him," observed the expert in the law. Jesus' reply was powerful and to the point — "<i>Go and do likewise.</i>"</p>3. Unfortunately, there seems to be an appalling lack of urgency in our response to HIV/AIDS — in general, in the Church, and in ourselves. Rather than urgency, our responses could be better described using words like complacent, apathetic, denial.<p>Why? We are busy with our own lives. We have our own prob-</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Why or why not? <p>4. Is there a stigma associated with HIV/AIDS?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ How would you describe it? ◆ Why does this stigma exist? ◆ What is the result of this stigma? <p>5. Have you ever known someone who had HIV/AIDS?</p> <p>6. Consider this question: <i>Am I satisfied with my present attitude and response towards people with HIV/AIDS or other serious needs/life-altering conditions?</i></p> <p>Wrap up: As we can see from the above discussion, there are complex issues and diverse perspectives concerning HIV/AIDS. In the weeks to come we will take a deeper look at these issues from a Christian perspective.</p>	<p>lems. But also—we are often uncomfortable with AIDS because of the stigma that surrounds it.</p> <p>4. Yes, there is stigma. We have tended to brand people living with HIV/AIDS as people who are homosexuals, drug abusers, or sexually promiscuous. We tend to look at them with a view towards judgment of their actions. There is a sense that they are getting what they deserve, a sense that “we” are different from and better than “they” are. Such an attitude builds barriers and feeds fear, condemnation, even hatred. It certainly does not facilitate cooperation, caring, helping and healing.</p> <p>5. Discuss.</p> <p>6. Discuss.</p>
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Take Action!

In today's discussion, I've learned _____



As a result, I will _____

— Lesson 2 —

Who am I anyway, and why does that matter?

<p>Starter: Role play — Who am I? Two young men meet for the first time and begin asking questions—</p> <p><i>Hi! Who are you??</i> <i>I am Joe Smith.</i> <i>No, that's your name. But WHO are YOU?</i> <i>Oh. I'm a university student studying law.</i> <i>No, that's what you do. But WHO are YOU?</i> <i>Hmm. I'm a man!</i> <i>No, that's your gender. WHO are YOU??</i> <i>Well, I'm an American!</i> <i>No, that's where you live. WHO are YOU??</i> <i>I don't know—WHO AM I??</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How would you answer the question above — <i>who are you?</i>2. Do you agree with this statement: <i>Before we can love others well, we have to love ourselves?</i> Why or why not?3. How does our sense of self worth affect how we relate to others?4. From where do most people draw	<p>Before we discuss more about HIV/ AIDS, we want to take time to talk about some important related issues, such as a Biblical view of sexuality, temptation, judgment, and suffering. Today, we want to look at what the Bible says about who we are — and consider how that affects our choices.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Discuss2. It is difficult for us to love and accept others if we do not love and accept ourselves.3. If we do not value ourselves, it is difficult for us to value others. Part of healthy self esteem is having a genuine reverence and respect for all God's creation, especially people! "We are his workmanship!" (Eph. 2:10), made in His own image (Gen. 1:27). People that truly value God's gift of life in them and in others — treat others with kindness, love and respect.4. Most of us draw our value from what we do, or what we own, or
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<p>their sense of value?</p> <p>5. Where do <i>you</i> draw your greatest sense of self worth/identity/value?</p> <p>6. What does God's Word have to say to believers about who we really are?</p> <p>7. How could we sum up our identity based on these verses?</p> <p>8. How do we get from knowledge of scripture to a personal ownership of the truth concerning who we really are?</p> <p>Wrap up: How does really knowing our true identity affect our life choices?</p>	<p>who we know. Our value is also affected by the perceived responses of significant people in our lives.</p> <p>5. Discuss.</p> <p>6. Take time to have group members read and discuss the following verses — what do they tell us about our true identity? Matt. 5:13, 14; John 1:12, John 15:15, 16, 1 Cor. 6:19, 2 Cor. 5:17–19, Rom. 1:7, Eph 2:10, Col 3:12, 1 Pet 2:9, 10. (For handout see Appendix C.)</p> <p>7. Discuss. We are very special to God, and His very life and nature are within us. He values us not because of what we do, but because of who we are — we are His!</p> <p>8. Someone once said that the greatest distance in the world is between our heads and our hearts. Far more important than what we know is really believing and applying what we know! Realizing who we are in Christ (and every truth in Scripture), must be revealed to us by the Holy Spirit and received through faith. This happens as we seek the Lord in His Word and in prayer. We can pray that God will “open the eyes of our heart,” so that we can see ourselves and others the way God sees us. See Eph. 1:17–20.</p> <p>Wrap up: Jesus observed that “whatever is in your heart determines what you say” (Matt. 12:34, NLT). Our words, thoughts and decisions all stem from our worldview, what we believe to be true about ourselves and others. Knowing the truth about who we are in Christ will affect every decision we make, and give us power to make the right choices.</p>
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Take Action!

In today's discussion, I've learned _____



As a result, I will _____

— Lesson 3 —

What does God think about sex?

<p><u>Ideas:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Contrary to popular opinion, God is very much pro human sexuality. What are some scriptures that support this statement?2. Are boundaries usually perceived to be good or bad?<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Why do we often dislike boundaries?◆ How are boundaries beneficial to us? Share examples.◆ Are cultural boundaries and God's boundaries the same?◆ How and when should we determine boundaries for our own lives?3. What is God's plan for our sexuality, as presented in the Bible? (Have students read verses and discuss application.)4. Read Matt. 5:27–28. What does this tell us about God's standard for sexual purity?5. Read Prov. 4:23. What does this verse have to do with personal purity?<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ How do we guard our hearts?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Bible shows us that God has given sex as a wonderful gift for husbands and wives. According to God's Word, He gives husbands and wives the gift of sex<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ For pleasure (Prov. 5:18–19).◆ For intimate oneness (Eph. 5:31).◆ For the creation of life (Gen. 1:28).2. Boundaries are often perceived to be limiting, and negative. The reality is boundaries give us a lot of freedom to live fully. The issue is not what God is keeping us <i>from</i>, but rather, what God is preserving us <i>for</i>. (Without river banks there would be no river — the water would just run out and disappear. The banks channel the water and keep it on course.) Cultural boundaries can look very different from God's boundaries. In fact, contemporary culture has tended to remove all boundaries in pursuit of freedom. Boundaries must be set in advance of the event/issue, through prayer and godly counsel.3. Discuss Heb. 13:4 and 1 Cor. 6: 9–20. God's plan for sexual purity involves abstinence for those who are not married and a faithful, monogamous, heterosexual relationship within marriage. Sex outside of marriage is never an option.4. "But I say to you, anyone looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." God's standard goes far beyond our actions and makes us accountable for our motives and thoughts. (Internet pornography, TV, movies, etc.)5. "Above all else guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life" (NIV). The Living Bible reads, "... guard your affections, for they influence every other area of your life." Living a pure life is only possible as we guard our hearts with the help of the Holy Spirit. We guard our hearts both offensively and defensively. That is, we guard it by what we choose to not expose ourselves to. We guard it as we carefully choose our relationships. And we also guard it as we draw nearer to Christ through seeking Him.
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Wrap up: God's standard for purity far exceeds our natural capability. Is it really possible to live according to His Word?

Wrap Up: Yes—but only through the power of His Holy Spirit at work in us.

Take Action!

In today's discussion, I've learned _____

As a result, I will _____



— Lesson 4 —

It's my choice

<p>1. How do you define sexual immorality?</p> <p>2. In the last session we talked about God's views on sex and sexuality. The application of these principles, however, involves a lot of personal choices. What are some of the most difficult/challenging choices that we face?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ How far is "too far" physically? Emotionally? <p>3. What factors can influence people to make poor choices concerning sex and their sexuality?</p> <p>4. What does it mean to take a stand? Why is it so easy to compromise?</p>	<p>1. According to the Bible it includes adultery, fornication, homosexuality, incest, prostitution, rape, and lust. (1 Cor. 6:9,10; Matt. 5:28)</p> <p>2. The popular culture around us is suggesting with a loud voice that anything short of sexual intercourse is not sex and therefore not sinning. But that definition of sex does not line up with the Bible. Jesus said, "Anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matt. 5:28).</p> <p>The biblical word to singles is "Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. 2:22). Sexually stimulating touch and physical intimacy between a man and a woman are part of the natural progression that in marriage leads to intercourse. Engaging in such activity before entering into a lifetime commitment of marriage is lust rather than love. It is selfish gratification of one's own pleasure rather than a proper concern for the welfare of the partner. God is able to help young couples desiring a committed Christian marriage to preserve themselves for a beautiful marriage of trust and faithfulness.</p> <p>3. Factors can include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ searching for love and acceptance◆ trying to prove maturity◆ peer pressure◆ the influence of drugs and alcohol◆ poor family role models and/ or abuse <p>4. Taking a stand involves</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ consistency between what we say and what we actually do◆ having convictions, and then not compromising them. (It's also worth mentioning that the strongest of convictions can falter under the influence of drugs and alcohol and ungodly peer pressure.)◆ being honest with others when asked to do or say something we don't agree with
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<p>5. What about temptation — where does it come from and who does it affect? Read & discuss 1 Pet. 5:8 and James 1:13, 14.</p> <p>6. How do we overcome temptation? Discuss these verses: Matt. 26:41, 1 Cor. 10:13, 2 Tim. 2:22.</p> <p>7. Do our choices affect others? Who is most often affected by our poor choices?</p> <p>Wrap up activity: Take a few minutes to write out a personal prayer to God concerning some choices or challenges that you are now facing.</p>	<p>It's easy to compromise because cultural norms clearly endorse almost any kind of sexual activity. This leads to desensitization. All of us have a strong desire to be accepted by our peers.</p> <p>5. Temptation comes from Satan and no one is exempt (1 Pet. 5:8). Temptation doesn't come from God but from our own evil desires, and ultimately leads to death (James 1:13, 14).</p> <p>6. Overcoming temptation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Matt. 26:41 — Be alert and prayerful, and aware of your own vulnerability. ◆ 1 Cor. 10:13 — Know that God is able to provide a way of escape or the capacity to withstand every temptation. Seek Him! ◆ 2 Tim. 2:22 — Run away from, distance yourself from evil desires and compromising situations, and learn how to call upon the Lord! <p>Control of the mind and its wandering thoughts is the key to sexual purity in dating and courtship. If the mind dwells on immediate physical gratification, the chances for a loving, committed marriage are greatly reduced. But if dating is seen as a time of getting to know the person who lives inside the body, rather than exploring the body, the possibility of a permanent Christian marriage can become a reality that God can bless.</p> <p>7. No person lives in a vacuum. We are usually unaware of just how far reaching our actions are. We must think beyond our own personal parameters and become more sensitive to others. The ones most affected by our poor choices are usually our families and close friends. Poor choices do not always have immediate consequences. Our poor choices made today may affect the lives of others in the future.</p> <p>Wrap up: The prayers from the wrap-up activity are personal and private. However, take time to pray for each other before closing this session.</p>
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Take Action!

In today's discussion, I've learned _____

As a result, I will _____

—Lesson 5—

Could it really be true?

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Have someone read John 8:1–11. How does this story reflect our typical response to the sins of others?2. In contrast to the others, how did Jesus respond to this woman?3. This woman received a priceless gift. What did she receive?<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Are we all equally in need of this gift?4. What does it take to receive this gift? Read 1 John 1:9.5. Is it sometimes harder to forgive ourselves than to receive God's forgiveness?6. Does God's forgiveness take away the consequences of our sins?7. Is forgiving those who have hurt us optional? Discuss Matt. 6:14, 15.8. God's forgiveness not only affects our past, but our future as well. What were	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. We are always quick to notice and point to the sins and shortcomings of others.2. Jesus was aware of the woman's sins before any words were spoken. Nothing in our lives is hidden from God. However, He looked beyond the sin and saw the woman's heart. He didn't defend her actions, but rather confronted those condemning her. His actions showed love and the desire to restore relationships. This story is a powerful illustration of the difference between forgiveness and condemnation.3. She received the gift of God's forgiveness, release from her accusers, and the chance at a new start.4. Forgiveness is freely given to those who come to Jesus in honesty and humility. We must acknowledge our sin before we can accept God's forgiveness and love.5. Definitely! But part of receiving God's forgiveness entails also forgiving ourselves and focusing on the future instead of the past.6. God's forgiveness and ability to restore us is complete, but does not override the consequences of our sin, such as STDs, pregnancies, broken relationships, and lost opportunities.7. Jesus said that God's forgiveness of us is contingent upon our forgiveness of others. Unforgiveness can only lead to bitterness, and bitterness keeps us bound to the past and unable to move forward. God is able to give us the grace to forgive others. There is a difference between forgiveness and trust. Forgiving someone is a choice, but trust in a relationship has to be earned.8. "Go now and leave your life of sin." Jesus focused on the woman's future rather than her past. He challenged her to leave
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<p>Jesus' parting words to the woman caught in adultery?</p> <p>9. In today's terminology, this could be described as "secondary virginity." What does this mean to you?</p> <p>Wrap up: What are some practical ways that we can live in sexual purity?</p>	<p>her past lifestyle and walk with purity into the future.</p> <p>9. For those who have been sexually active before marriage, secondary virginity is the decision to abstain from sexual activity, starting from today, until the day you get married. It's an opportunity to start over. Though physical virginity may be lost, virginity is more than just a physical state. A scriptural view of virginity is — having a pure heart, valuing ourselves as belonging to God, and committing ourselves to honor God and keep His Word.</p> <p>Wrap Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Make a firm commitment to save yourself for marriage from now on, and believe you can do it with God's help. ◆ Get away from people, places, and situations that weaken your self-control. Sometimes the healthiest thing we can do is to avoid people who tempt us. ◆ Avoid intense hugging, passionate kissing and anything else that leads to lustful thoughts and behavior. Anything beyond a brief, simple kiss can be dangerous. ◆ Find non-physical ways to show your love and appreciation. ◆ Pray daily for God to help you control your impulses, thoughts, and responses.
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Take Action!

In today's discussion, I've learned _____



As a result, I will _____

—Lesson 6—

But why?

Starter: Consider opening this session with the “*He Knows My Name*” video included on the CD.

1. When we observe the magnitude of suffering caused by AIDS around the world, we have to ask ourselves, where is God in the midst of such tragedy? Why does God allow diseases like AIDS?

2. Why does God allow pain and suffering?

3. Is HIV/AIDS God’s judgment for sinful behavior?

1. From the Bible’s perspective we can see the world in three ways:

- ◆ *God’s ideal world:* this was the world before sin came and changed everything. This was paradise — with no pain or suffering or sickness or death.
- ◆ *The real world we live in:* God gave man the freedom to choose. Disobedience resulted in separation from God and the proliferation of sin. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). This sin has affected our spiritual and physical well-being. Consequences are a world of pain, greed, violence, disease, abuse, famine and suffering.
- ◆ *God’s desire to renew and redeem:* God made a way to restore His creation, through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus. Through faith in Him, our relationship with God is restored and “all things become new” (1 Cor. 5:17). We live with hope and joy in the prospect of eternal life. However, the consequences of sin and disobedience remain, because we are living in the real world.*

2. Pain and suffering were not part of God’s “ideal world.” In the life to come, we know that “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain ...” (Rev. 21:4). In the real world, however, there is much pain and suffering—not because God has chosen it, but because we have chosen it through our collective disobedience.

3. Questions like this cannot be answered with a simple *yes* or *no*. It is true, however, that the HIV virus has often been spread through sexual behavior that does not follow God’s plan for human sexuality, and through drug abuse which also contradicts His laws.

We also know that thousands of people suffering from HIV/AIDS have been infected through someone else’s disobedience rather than through their personal sin or choices. For example, babies

<p>4. Read John 9:1–7. What question did the disciples ask Jesus?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ What ancient and yet contemporary erroneous belief is reflected in their question? <p>5. How did Jesus respond to this wrong perspective?</p> <p>Wrap-up: Jesus challenged the accusers of the woman taken in adultery to look at their own hearts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ What actions in your own life put you at risk for physical harm, sickness or suffering? ◆ What could be the possible outcomes of these activities? ◆ Has God shown mercy to you? ◆ How then should you respond to others? 	<p>of HIV-positive mothers, infected blood recipients, abused children, spouses of unfaithful partners, etc. Even so, Jesus showed the would-be stoners of the woman taken in adultery that none of us is without sin (John 8). Neither are we exempt from experiencing the ramifications of our sinful world.</p> <p>Author John Piper makes this interesting observation: <i>“The fact that any of us is healthy after sinning is owing to Christ’s mercy. Therefore, the fact that some are sick after sinning should bring out Christian mercy. And there is need for extraordinary mercy.”*</i></p> <p>4. They asked, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”</p> <p>Many people have wrongly assumed that all sickness and suffering is the consequence of personal sin. They claim that “people usually get what they deserve.”</p> <p>5. Jesus taught his disciples that specific consequences cannot necessarily be tied to specific sins. In this case, “neither this man or his parents sinned!” Rather, this situation was an opportunity for God’s glory to be displayed. Our role is not to judge others (James 4:12), but to encourage them to become obedient to God’s Word.</p> <p>Wrap-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Actions in our lives that put us at risk: unsafe driving, drinking alcohol, taking illicit drugs, experimenting with sex, making poor food choices, smoking, participating in high risk sports, choosing the wrong friends. ◆ Discuss possible outcomes of high risk behaviors. ◆ Think of specific examples. Invite someone to share if they are willing. ◆ We have all freely received more of God’s mercy and protection than we even realize. We who have received much mercy are obligated to give that same mercy to others.
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* Colson, First, Piper, Stearns in *The Hope Factor*. World Vision, 2003.

Take Action!

In today's discussion, I've learned _____

As a result, I will _____

—Lesson 7—

Faith, hope and love

<p>1. We've been discussing the overwhelming spiritual and physical needs of people suffering from HIV/AIDS or other life threatening illnesses. What convictions about God do we have to hold in our own hearts before we can minister to others?</p> <p>2. The first response in addressing any need should always be prayer. What are some specific things you can pray about?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Are you satisfied with your prayer life?◆ If not, what might you do to improve it? <p>3. Do you believe that God can heal anyone?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Does He still heal people today?◆ Can anyone share an example of a healing you have witnessed or experienced? <p>4. Why isn't everyone that is prayed for healed?</p>	<p>1. Everything we do has to be built on a foundation of faith in the Sovereignty of God. Before we can minister to others effectively, we must have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Faith in God's power to transform our lives as we put our trust in Him◆ Faith that God hears and answers our prayers according to His divine plan.◆ Faith in God's ability to heal and restore physical, spiritual and emotional health.◆ Confidence in the character of God — He is always and only good, just, and wise in His ways.◆ Hope in His promise of eternal life; a place and existence more real than the world we now live in. <p>2. Pray for <i>ourselves</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ For wisdom and guidance in responding to specific situations◆ For greater love, compassion and faith to respond to the needs around us <p>Pray for <i>those affected</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Provision of needed resources and support◆ To experience God's love and salvation◆ To experience God's healing power <p>3. The gospels are full of examples of Jesus healing the sick.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Mark 1:34 — those with all kinds of diseases came to him and were healed.◆ Luke 9:1, 2 — Not only did Jesus heal the sick, he also gave his disciples authority to heal the sick.◆ In James 5:13–16, the Bible teaches us how to pray for the sick, and reminds us that “the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” <p>4. We have to admit that we'll never understand everything about divine healing. As Paul said, “now we see through a glass darkly” (1 Cor. 13:12). We don't understand why some people are healed and others are not, any more than we understand why God permitted James to be martyred and Peter to be deliv-</p>
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5. Do you agree with this? "Faith in God's power to heal and restore is foundational, but, it is not enough." Why or why not?

◆ Discuss the following verses: James 2:14-17.

6. Read Matthew 22:34-40. Is it possible to love God without loving others? How does this passage relate to our discussion about putting our faith into action?

Wrap Up: Are most Christians today responding in Christ's compassion towards people living with HIV/AIDS? Why or why not?

ered. Scripture makes it clear, however, that our part is to preach the Word and expect the signs to follow.

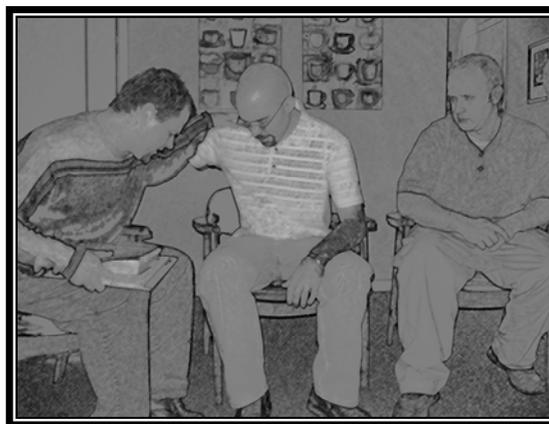
5. These verses show us that faith must be accompanied by actions. It's easy to talk about what we believe, but it is harder to put those beliefs into action.

6. Our love for God is demonstrated by our love for each other. Love is not a belief. Love is a choice. Love is an action. 1 Cor. 13:2 tells us that we can have all the faith in the world, but without love, we are nothing. The highest command that God has given us is to love. As believers who have tasted the love of God, we have a capacity to love that other people do not have. No one should have a more loving approach to people living with HIV/AIDS than we who are forgiven in Christ.

Wrap Up: (Discuss their responses.) As Christians, we must set aside attitudes of prejudice, fear, and apathy, and put on the Christ-like qualities of love, compassion and courage.

Take Action!

In today's discussion, I've learned _____



As a result, I will _____

—Lesson 8—

But what can I do?

<p>1. Last week we discussed the crucial role of personal faith and Christ-like love in our response to people who are suffering. We were challenged that “faith without works is dead.” In light of the worldwide HIV/AIDS pandemic, what are some practical things that we <i>can do</i> to make a difference?</p> <p>2. Responses to the HIV/AIDS crisis can take place at a community, church, campus, or individual level. What are some things that could be done through the support of a local group?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Could you be a catalyst to initiate one of these activities? <p>3. One of the suggested options for helping people living with HIV/AIDS is through a support group. Whether in a support group or on an individual basis, what are some key factors to remember when providing support to someone who is struggling? Or in other words, how do we put our compassion into action?</p> <p>(Consider having participants break up into small groups to discuss this question, then return and share answers with the whole group.)</p> <p>Note: some of these suggestions will apply more to a one-on-one situation, and others are more applicable to a support group setting.</p>	<p>1. We can begin praying for specific people and situations. Becoming more informed about issues both locally and internationally can help us to be more specific in our prayers. We can give money to people or organizations that are actively involved in AIDS ministry. We can volunteer time to church or community based outreaches to people with HIV/AIDS or other terminal illnesses. We can befriend people who are affected by AIDS.</p> <p>2. Ideas for involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Providing practical support to affected individuals and families (assisting with shopping, childcare, cleaning, errands, etc.)◆ Prayer for those who are ill and their families◆ Hosting or helping with a support group◆ Grief counseling for individuals and families <p>3. Suggestions for providing support and putting our compassion into action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ First and foremost, the person with HIV has to feel safe with you.◆ Be there. Don't avoid someone who is infected. Express your concern both verbally and through touch.◆ Be compassionate. Be sensitive to the person's condition and needs on a daily basis.◆ Listen! Listening is a most important key. Sometimes presence and willingness to listen is more comforting than any words.◆ Keep confidences! Keep what you know to yourself.◆ Remember that support is as essential as medicine.◆ Realize that people require different levels of support.◆ Leave the judgment to God.◆ Socialize. Encourage the person to engage in normal social interactions as much as they can.◆ Worship together. Make opportunities for regular sharing of prayer, scripture and church attendance if possible.◆ Be there at the end.◆ Be there for the family and friends during the grieving period.
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<p>4. Sometimes our fear of “not knowing what to say” keeps us away from someone who is dealing with tragedy or serious illness. Someone has observed that “you are only trying to find many ways to say: ‘I love you, and I care.’”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ What are things that we can say? ◆ What are things that we should not say? <p>5. What can we do in response to the massive AIDS epidemic on the other side of the world?</p> <p>Wrap Up: “Today is unique! It has never occurred before, and it will never be repeated. At midnight it will end — quietly, suddenly, totally. Forever. But the hours between now and then are opportunities with endless possibilities. With God’s enablement, live this day to the fullest, as if it were your last day on earth. Live to make a difference.” (quote from <i>Living Insights Study Bible</i>)</p>	<p>4. <i>Things to say:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ I’m sorry. ◆ I care about you. ◆ I’d like to be your friend. ◆ Please help me understand how you feel. ◆ Is there any question that keeps coming to your mind? ◆ If this happened to me, I think I might feel (angry, upset, etc.). Is that how you feel? ◆ Do you have the support you need from your (friends, family, church)? ◆ When I pray for you tonight, is there something you would like me to pray for? ◆ Do you need anything I could bring you the next time I come around? <p><i>Things not to say:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ I know how you feel. (You can’t, unless they tell you.) ◆ How did you get AIDS? (What difference does it make?) ◆ All things work together for good. (This misuse of a Bible verse is not much help in the face of AIDS.) ◆ Call me if you need something. (They won’t, unless they are truly desperate, in which case you should drop everything and go.) * <p>5. The slogan “<i>think globally, act locally</i>” really is pretty good advice. But concerning the people who are suffering from AIDS all around the world — we can</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Pray — specifically for people and ministries around the world. ◆ Give — financially to the work of missions and Christian ministries who are involved in AIDS work. ◆ Go — consider going and being personally involved in bringing the hope of Christ to the suffering through compassionate ministry.
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* *When AIDS Comes Home*. Mignon Zylstra, David Biebel. 1996, Thomas Nelson Publishers. P.185. Scripture references taken from the *New International Version* and *King James Version*.

Take Action!

In today’s discussion, I’ve learned _____

As a result, I will _____

— Appendix A —

HIV/AIDS Quiz

True or False

- _____ 1. AIDS is caused by a virus.
- _____ 2. No one has completely recovered from AIDS.
- _____ 3. HIV can be transmitted by an infected person even though there are no symptoms of infection.
- _____ 4. There is a vaccine for HIV.
- _____ 5. HIV is present in certain body fluids; mainly semen, blood and vaginal secretions.
- _____ 6. HIV is not highly contagious.
- _____ 7. In the USA it is now nearly impossible to get HIV from a blood transfusion.
- _____ 8. There is a chance of getting HIV from donating blood.
- _____ 9. Every child born of a woman with HIV acquires the virus during or after birth.
- _____ 10. The number of heterosexual men and women infected with HIV has increased.
- _____ 11. AIDS is a problem among all races.
- _____ 12. The majority of persons with AIDS in many Sub-Saharan Africa countries are homosexual and bisexual men.
- _____ 13. All persons who have sex, even if they are not members of AIDS high risk groups, should take the HIV antibody test. CDC states youth ages 13-21 are at high risk if sexually active.
- _____ 14. Teenagers can get confidential HIV antibody testing and counseling.
- _____ 15. Many persons have been infected with HIV through casual contact.
- _____ 16. There have been reported cases where HIV was transmitted by kissing only.
- _____ 17. IV drug users are at risk of HIV if they share needles or syringes.

Answers to HIV/AIDS Quiz

1. True
2. True
3. True
4. False
5. True
6. True
7. True
8. False
9. False
10. True
11. True
12. False
13. True
14. True
15. False
16. False
17. True

— Appendix B —

AIDS Testing Survey

(Fact, Myth, Opinion, Unknown)

Directions: read each statement and place an "X" under the heading that you think best reflects the statement.

	STATEMENT	FACT	MYTH	OPINION	UNKNOWN
1.	An HIV positive test means the person is infected with HIV.				
2.	A positive test means a person has AIDS.				
3.	A negative test means the person is not infected and will never develop the disease even if the person has participated in risky behavior.				
4.	A negative test means the person is not infected or is infected but has not yet produced antibodies.				
5.	Being tested for HIV gives those engaged in risky behaviors better knowledge of whether they have been exposed to the virus.				
6.	Being tested will serve as a "red flag" to make a person change sexual practices and practice "safer sex".				
7.	Testing contributes to AIDS research and knowledge.				
8.	Before being tested, a person needs to consider how a positive result will affect them, physically, mentally and emotionally.				
9.	People who do not participate in high risk behaviors need not be tested.				
10.	A person with a positive test result can be dismissed from or denied employment.				
11.	There are no groups required to take the test.				
12.	All people engaging in risky behavior should take the test to find out their status.				

Answers to AIDS Testing Survey

1. **Fact**: A positive test means a person is infected with HIV. A positive result is only reported in the USA after three tests have been done.
2. **Myth**: This is not a test for AIDS.
3. **Myth**: There are a small number of false results but there may be a delay in the test responding positive.
4. **Fact**: A negative test means the person is not infected or is infected but has not yet produced antibodies.
5. **Fact**: Being tested for HIV gives those engaged in risky behaviors better knowledge of whether they have been exposed to the virus.
6. **Opinion**: Some people may be motivated to change their behaviors while others may not.
7. **Fact**: Most research is done through blind studies (participants unidentified) research rather than voluntary testing centers. Testing centers compile statistics to show country trends.
8. **Opinion**: An individual needs to consider how it will affect them, physically, mentally and emotionally. They must be prepared to deal with the results.
9. **Fact**: Unless a person has a specific reason to be tested it need not be done.
10. **Myth**: The Civil Rights Act protects them.
11. **Myth**: Military, immigrations and some insurance companies require testing.
12. **Opinion**: Taking the test is a personal choice; everyone should practice safer sex (abstinence is safest) and avoid sharing needles.

— Appendix C —

Who am I?

Read these scriptures to learn who you really are.

SCRIPTURE	THEME
Matt. 5:13	I am the salt of the earth.
Matt. 5:14	I am the light of the world.
John 1:12	I am a child of God.
John 15:1, 5	I am part of the true vine, a channel of Christ's life.
John 15:15	I am Christ's friend.
John 15:16	I am chosen and appointed by Christ to bear His fruit.
Rom. 6:18	I am a slave of righteousness.
Rom. 6:22	I am enslaved to God.
Rom. 8:14, 15; Gal. 3:26; 4:6	I am a son of God; God is spiritually my Father.
Rom. 8:17	I am a joint heir with Christ, sharing His inheritance with Him.
1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19	I am a temple — a dwelling place — of God. His Spirit and His life dwell in me.
1 Cor. 6:17	I am united to the Lord and am one spirit with Him.
1 Cor. 12:27, Eph. 5:30	I am a member of Christ's Body.
2 Cor. 5:17	I am a new creation.
2 Cor. 5:18, 19	I am reconciled to God and am a minister of reconciliation.
Gal. 3:26, 28	I am a son of God and one in Christ.
Gal. 4:6, 7	I am an heir of God since I am a son of God.
Eph. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:2	I am a saint.
Eph. 2:10	I am God's workmanship — His handiwork — born anew in Christ to do His work.
Eph. 2:19	I am a fellow citizen with the rest of God's family.
Eph. 3:1; 4:1	I am a prisoner of Christ.
Eph. 4:24	I am righteous and holy.
Phil. 3:20; Eph. 2:6	I am a citizen of heaven, seated in heaven right now.
Col. 3:3	I am hidden with Christ in God.
Col. 3:4	I am an expression of the life of Christ because He is my life.

SCRIPTURE	THEME
Col. 3:12; 1 Thes. 1:4	I am chosen of God, holy and dearly loved.
1 Thes. 5:5	I am a son of light and not of darkness.
Heb. 3:1	I am a holy partaker of a heavenly calling.
Heb. 3:4	I am a partaker of Christ, I share in His life.
1 Pet. 2:5	I am one of God's living stones, being built up in Christ as a spiritual house.
1 Pet.2:9, 10	I am a member of a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession.
1 Pet. 2:11	I am an alien and stranger to this world in which I temporarily live.
1 Pet. 5:8	I am an enemy of the devil.
1 John 3:1, 2	I am a child of God and I will resemble Christ when He returns.
1 John 5:18	I am born of God, and the evil one, the devil, cannot touch me.
Exo. 3:14; John 8:24, 28, 58; 1 Cor. 5:10	I am not the great "I AM", but by the grace of God, I am what I am.