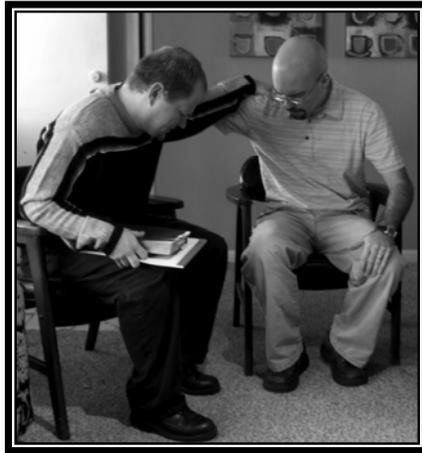


Sharpening Your Focus on HIV/AIDS

A Bible Study



— Student Guide —

*Created by the
Global AIDS Partnership*

Notes for Students

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

This Study Guide consists of eight lessons, designed to take approximately one hour each. This may vary depending on the amount of discussion and group dynamics. An accompanying facilitator's guide for group leaders 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.

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— Lesson 1 —

HIV AIDS: What's it to me?

Starter: Optional knowledge tests on HIV/AIDS.

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.

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?
 - ◆ In general? (Or, in the general population?)
 - ◆ In the Church?
 - ◆ In ourselves?
 - ◆ Why or why not?
4. Is there a stigma associated with HIV/AIDS?
 - ◆ How would you describe it?
 - ◆ Why does this stigma exist?
 - ◆ What is the result of this stigma?
5. Have you ever known someone who had HIV/AIDS?

6. Consider this question: *Am I satisfied with my present attitude and response towards people with HIV/AIDS or other serious needs/life-altering conditions?*

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.

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?

Starter: Role play — Who am I?

Two young men meet for the first time and begin asking questions—

Hi! Who are you??

I am Joe Smith.

No, that's your name. But WHO are YOU?

Oh. I'm a university student studying law.

No, that's what you do. But WHO are YOU?

Hmm. I'm a man!

No, that's your gender. WHO are YOU??

Well, I'm an American!

No, that's where you live. WHO are YOU??

I don't know—WHO AM I??

1. How would you answer the question above — *who are you?*
2. Do you agree with this statement: *Before we can love others well, we have to love ourselves?* 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 their sense of value?

5. Where do *you* draw your greatest sense of self worth/identity/value?

6. What does God's Word have to say to believers about who we really are? (See 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.)

7. How could we sum up our identity based on these verses?

8. How do we get from knowledge of scripture to a personal ownership of the truth concerning who we really are?

Wrap up: How does really knowing our true identity affect our life choices?

Take Action!

In today's discussion, I've learned _____

As a result, I will _____

— Lesson 3 —

What does God think about sex?

Ideas:

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?
 - ◆ 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? (See Heb. 13:4 and 1 Cor. 6: 9–20.)
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?
 - ◆ How do we guard our hearts?

Wrap up: God's standard for purity far exceeds our natural capability. Is it really possible to live according to His Word?

Take Action!

In today's discussion, I've learned



As a result, I will _____

— Lesson 4 —

It's my choice

1. How do you define sexual immorality?
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?
 - ◆ How far is "too far" physically? Emotionally?
3. What factors can influence people to make poor choices concerning sex and their sexuality?
4. What does it mean to take a stand? Why is it so easy to compromise?
5. What about temptation — where does it come from and who does it affect? Read and discuss 1 Pet. 5:8 and James 1:13, 14.
6. How do we overcome temptation? Discuss these verses: Matt. 26:41, 1 Cor. 10:13, 2 Tim. 2:22.

7. Do our choices affect others? Who is most often affected by our poor choices?

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.

Take Action!

In today's discussion, I've learned



As a result, I will _____

—Lesson 5 —

Could it really be true?

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?
 - ◆ 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 Jesus' parting words to the woman caught in adultery?

9. In today's terminology, this could be described as "secondary virginity." What does this mean to you?

Wrap up: What are some practical ways that we can live in sexual purity?

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?
4. Read John 9:1–7. What question did the disciples ask Jesus?
 - ◆ What ancient and yet contemporary erroneous belief is reflected in their question?
5. How did Jesus respond to this wrong perspective?

Wrap-up: Jesus challenged the accusers of the woman taken in adultery to look at their own hearts.

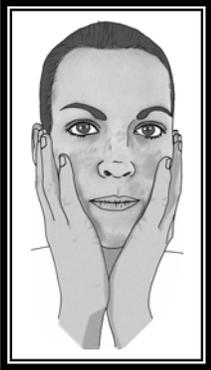
- ◆ What actions in your own life put you at risk for physical harm, sickness or suffering?

- ◆ What could be the possible outcomes of these activities?
- ◆ Has God shown mercy to you?
- ◆ How then should you respond to others?

* 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

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?

2. The first response in addressing any need should always be prayer. What are some specific things you can pray about?
 - ◆ Are you satisfied with your prayer life?
 - ◆ If not, what might you do to improve it?

3. Do you believe that God can heal anyone?
 - ◆ Does He still heal people today?
 - ◆ Can anyone share an example of a healing you have witnessed or experienced?

4. Why isn't everyone that is prayed for healed?

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?

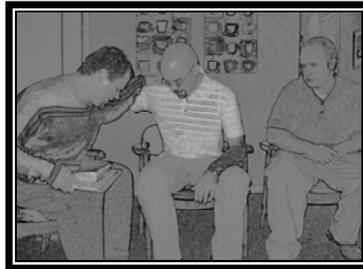
◆ Discuss the following verses: James 2:14–17.

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?

Take Action!

In today's discussion, I've learned



As a result, I will _____

—Lesson 8—

But what can I do?

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 *can do* to make a difference?

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?
 - ◆ Could you be a catalyst to initiate one of these activities?

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?

(Consider breaking up into small groups to discuss this question, then return and share answers with the whole group.)

Note: some of these suggestions will apply more to a one-on-one situation, and others are more applicable to a support group setting.

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.’”
 - ◆ What are things that we can say?

 - ◆ What are things that we should not say?
5. What can we do in response to the massive AIDS epidemic on the other side of the world?

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 *Living Insights Study Bible*)

**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	OPIN.	UNK.
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				

	STATEMENT	FACT	MYTH	OPIN.	UNK.
	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.

SCRIPTURE	THEME
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.
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.

SCRIPTURE	THEME
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.