

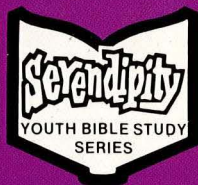
STUDENTS BOOK



HASSLES:

On Relationships

By Lyman Coleman and Denny Rydberg



SERENDIPITY YOUTH BIBLE STUDY SERIES

MOORE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE LIBRARY



3 2042 1009224 1

HASSLES:

On Relationships

by
Lyman Coleman and Denny Rydberg



Scripture Union
130 City Road London EC1V 2NJ



Serendipity House, Box 1012, Littleton, Co 80160
USA

©1983 Serendipity House

UK Edition © Scripture Union 1984

Reprinted January 1985

Published by Scripture Union,
130 City Road, London EC1V 2NJ.

ISBN 0 86201 200 7

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of Scripture Union.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

☐ Joe Narracci and Cheryl Guth for a lot of the preliminary research.
☐ Steve Hoke (Seattle Pacific University) and Paul Evans and his staff (Youth Dynamics of Anacortes, Washington) for help in writing/testing the material. ☐ Anton Baumohl, Lance Pierson, Emlyn Williams and Becky Totterdell, the English editors. ☐ Wayne Rice, Denny Rydberg, and Mike Yaconelli for permission to use crowd breakers from 'Fun and Games.' © 1977 by Youth Specialities. Used by permission from Zondervan Publishing House. ☐ The American Bible Society for permission to use the Good News Bible. © 1976, American Bible Society. ☐ New York International Bible Society for permission to use the New International Version of the Bible, © 1973, 1978, by the New York International Bible Society.

Phototypeset by Input Typesetting Ltd, London
Printed in Great Britain by
Ebenezer Baylis & Son Limited,
The Trinity Press, Worcester, and London

Session 1 **LIFE'S HEADACHES**

What causes the headaches in my life?

Session 2 **FAMILY FLARE-UPS**

How well do we relate in our family?

Session 3 **KILLER CLIQUES**

How well do I get along with my 'friends'?

Session 4 **BREAKING UP**

When relationships turn sour, then what?

Session 5 **POWER GAMES**

Who are the authority figures in my life and how do I get along with them?

Session 6 **WHY THIS, LORD?**

Why doesn't God give me a better deal?

Session 7 **BREAKING FREE**

Do problems handle me or do I handle them?

This book belongs to _____

'But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.'

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

*Are you fed up
with hassles?
Tired of getting
bogged down
by problems and poor
relationships?*

*Then, join the adventure.
And learn how to
see hassles
in a new way. . .
how to rise above them
and become part of
the solution instead of being
part of the problem*

*Join the adventure.
Join us.*

BEFORE AND AFTER

Handling Hassles

Before you start this course, check your 'hassle quotient.' On the six categories below (corresponding to six of the areas you will cover in this course) put a dot on the line below each category to indicate how you handle hassles—somewhere in between **REALLY GET ME DOWN. . .and DON'T BOTHER ME AT ALL.**

For example, on **LITTLE HEADACHES**, you might put the dot close to **DON'T BOTHER ME AT ALL** because you are good at coping with little headaches.

At the end of the course, you will take this test again to see if you have learned how to deal with hassles better. (On the second test, use an 'x' to mark your spot.)

LITTLE HEADACHES (session 1): 'I find that little things. . .'

Really get me down _____ Don't bother me at all

FAMILY FLARE-UPS (session 2): 'I find that conflicts at home with my parents, brother/sister. . .'

Really get me down _____ Don't bother me at all

KILLER CLIQUES (session 3): 'I find that cliques at school and church. . .'

Really get me down _____ Don't bother me at all

BREAKING UP (session 4): 'When a close relationship turns sour, it. . .'

Really gets me down _____ Doesn't bother me at all

POWER GAMES (session 5): 'I find getting along with the "authority figures" in my life. . .'

Really gets me down _____ Doesn't bother me at all

Why this, Lord? (session 6): 'I find that big problems and major crises in my life. . .'

Really get me down _____ Don't bother me at all

Life's Headaches

(Instructions in Leader's Guide)

WARM-UP Headache-Survey

Here's a chance to find out what are the top headache situations in your youth group. The leader will go through the list below and give you a chance to vote whether the situations below cause a 1-aspirin, 2-aspirin, or 3-aspirin headache. Have fun.

- ___ baby-sitting for little brother/sister
- ___ getting up in the morning
- ___ homework
- ___ not having enough money
- ___ arguing with parents
- ___ spider in the bath
- ___ people I don't get along with at school
- ___ church youth group
- ___ rules/regulations
- ___ worrying about getting caught for something I did wrong
- ___ teeth braces
- ___ getting fat



- ___ worrying about my parents' divorce or their possibility of divorcing
- ___ boys
- ___ girls
- ___ exams
- ___ losing my friends
- ___ tidying my room
- ___ video addicts
- ___ missing my favourite TV programme
- ___ fingernails run down blackboard
- ___ punk rock music
- ___ looking for a job
- ___ spots
- ___
- ___

STARTER BIBLE STUDY

Oh, Brother!

How do you handle little headaches? After the Bible passage and the PROBLEM of 'little brother' have been read, get together with one other person from your C-Group and work together on the questions.

LOOKING INTO THE STORY

1. How do you feel about your 'brother' as described under the passage on the next page? (Choose two.)

- a. like killing him
- b. 'that's OK; he's my brother'
- c. a little upset, but what can you do?
- d. 'I was a kid once.'
- e. 'One day I'll be glad I have a little brother'

2. What would you do?

- a. choke him
- b. talk to him calmly
- c. put a lock on the door
- d. forgive him
- e. complain to your mother
- f. other _____

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?'

Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.'

'Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents (over a million pounds) was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.'

'The servant fell on his knees before him. "Be patient with me," he begged, "and I will pay back everything." The servant's master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go.'

'But when the servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii (a few pounds). He grabbed him and began to choke him. "Pay back what you owe me!" he demanded.'

'His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, "Be patient with me, and I will pay you back."

'But he refused. Instead he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.'

'Then the master called the servant in, "You wicked servant," he said, "I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?" In anger his master turned him over to the jailers until he should pay back all he owed.'

'This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.'

Matthew 18:21-35

PROBLEM (Little brother)

You have a little brother who is always coming into your room when you are out. He messes around with your stereo, reads your personal letters, and 'borrows' whatever he wants. He also leaves his things all over the bathroom and runs to 'daddy' if you say anything.

3. In the Bible passage what is Peter really asking in his question?

- a. How much do I have to put up with from my friends?
- b. Do I have the right to be told off?
- c. When my friend does not measure up to my expectations, what do I do?
- d. My friend makes me mad. Do I have the right to cut him off?
- e. How can I live a Christian life when I have to live with people who take advantage of me?

5. When you get hurt in relationships, what do you do? (choose two)

- a. have it out with the person
- b. sulk for three days
- c. blow up
- d. withdraw into your room
- e. cry on the youth leader's shoulder
- f. try to see it from the other person's point of view
- g. watch TV all night
- h. complain to God
- i. other _____

4. What is Jesus really saying in the parable? (choose two)

- a. You can't 'keep score'.
- b. You've got to be as patient with your brother as God is with you.
- c. Don't lend money, because it always causes hard feelings.
- d. If you are really a Christian, you will not have conflicts with people.
- e. If you don't forgive your brother, you will be thrown into hell.
- f. If you have experienced God's forgiveness, you will be more patient with your friends.

6. What is the easiest way for you to deal with conflict?

- a. write a letter
- b. do the dishes without being asked
- c. take the person out for a coffee
- d. surprise the person with a little gift
- e. ignore it and hope for the best
- f. be open and honest about it
- g. other _____

7. Finish the following sentence with the first thing that comes to mind.

'When someone has deliberately taken advantage of me, I usually. . . .'

'If I am going to live as Jesus lived, I need to remember that. . . .'

GOING FURTHER A Better Way

If you think you have headaches, you ought to have seen the Christians who lived in Corinth. They had conflicts coming out of their ears. Take a few minutes with your partner and evaluate your 'hassle habits' against the model given by the apostle Paul in Corinthians 13—the Love Chapter.

1. Rank yourself from 1 to 10—1 being very poor and 10 being very good—on the various definitions of love given in 1 Corinthians 13.

LOVE IS PATIENT: (I don't flare up when things don't go my way; I don't take out my frustrations on my friends or family.) On 'patience', I give myself a score of. . . . (circle a number)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

LOVE IS KIND: (I am sensitive to others' feelings; I try to understand when others are having a bad day, especially those I love.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

LOVE IS NOT RUDE: (I do not get nasty when I don't get my way, or lash out with crude remarks to 'get back' at those I love.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

LOVE IS NOT SELFISH: (I don't have to have my own way to feel important; I try to see things from others' point of view—especially those I love.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. How is a Christian to deal with little hassles and conflicts? From the Bible passage below, jot down three things you are to STOP DOING and three things you are expected to START DOING:

'Get rid of all bitterness, passion, and anger. No more shouting or insults, no more hateful feelings of any sort. Instead, be kind and tender-hearted to one another, and forgive one another, as God has forgiven you through Christ.'
Ephesians 4:31–32, GNB

STOP DOING

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. As a Christian what are you to do when you have been wronged? In your own words, using the Bible verses below, jot down four things you are supposed to do.

'If someone has done you wrong, do not repay him with a wrong. Try to do what everyone considers to be good. Do everything possible on your part to live in peace with everybody. Never take revenge. . . .'
Romans 12:17–19, GNB

FOUR THINGS TO DO WHEN I HAVE BEEN WRONGED:

1. _____

2. _____

START DOING

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Personal Application: Think about the next 7 days—one week. What is one relationship that you would like to work on in the next 7 days? Jot this down. Finish the sentence: 'For the next 7 days, I would like to work on the little conflicts I have with. . . .'

If you could have two wishes that would come true in the next 7 days in the relationship you jotted down above, what would you wish? Finish the sentence: 'I wish I could. . . .' For example: 'I wish I could get together with so and so this week and talk about. . . .'

Remember these are just wishes. You are not saying you are going to do this, but 'wish' you could.

'I wish I could. . . .'

'I wish I could. . . .'

Family Flare-Ups

(Instructions in Leader's Guide)

C-GROUP WARM-UP

Hassle Analysis

Read through the list of family-type hassles below. Some of them may be real to you, and others may not. Tick those that bother you the most. Then, rank the top 5 hassles for you—1 being the biggest hassle, 2 the next biggest, etc.

- ___ jobs around the house
- ___ discipline
- ___ smoking/driving
- ___ step-parents
- ___ lack of respect
- ___ no biscuits in the tin
- ___ unhappiness in the home
- ___ broken home, going through divorce, or just completed divorce
- ___ inconsistency of parents



- ___ strict decisions on music, hours, friends
- ___ non-Christian parents
- ___ Christian parents
- ___ can't watch my favourite TV programme
- ___ parents are never home
- ___ parents are always nagging me
- ___ going to church
- ___ parents won't give me more pocket-money

CODING: Now go back over the list and put in the margin the following symbols to indicate who you think causes the problem or whose problem it is.

M = Me (it's my problem or I cause the problem)

P = Parents (it's my parents' problem or they cause the problem)

O = Other (someone or something else is the cause of the problem)

STARTER BIBLE STUDY

A Tale of Two Sons

After the Bible passage (Luke 15:11–32) has been read, get together with one other from your C-Group and work together on the questions under 'Looking into the Story'. (The passage is in the *Leader's Guide*.)

LOOKING INTO THE STORY:

1. Why do you think the younger son wanted to leave his family and home?

- a. disagreements with his brother
- b. wanted his own room
- c. tired of being picked on as the youngest
- d. couldn't drink beer at home
- e. wanted his freedom
- f. felt he could make better decisions
- g. it was the thing to do

- h. couldn't get along with his parents
- i. other _____

2. How long did the fun last?

- a. for ever
- b. as long as his money lasted
- c. until his Barclaycard expired
- d. for a week
- e. not long enough

3. Do you think he would have been better off staying at home?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No Why?

4. Why was the older brother mad?

- a. he couldn't get away
- b. he always had to baby-sit
- c. he felt his father loved his brother more than him
- d. he did everything his father wanted him to do—to no advantage
- e. he secretly envied what his younger brother did
- f. his younger brother stole his girl
- g. he liked to moan a lot
- h. other _____

7. Describe in your own words what the *younger son* learned about family hassles: (finish each sentence below)

The younger son learned that. . .

He learned to appreciate the. . .

He wished that. . .

He realised that his father really. . .

He learned that in order to really appreciate one's parents, you must. . .

MY OWN STORY: Complete the rest of these questions on your own.

1. When have you wanted to leave home?

- a. when we're out of Club biscuits
- b. when mum burns the dinner
- c. when the stress is too much
- d. when my brother/sister hassles me

- e. when I get no respect
- f. when everyone is against me
- g. when my parents nag me
- h. when I'm lonely
- i. other _____

5. Answer the following questions.

YES NO

- ☐ ☐ Did the father really love the younger son?
- ☐ ☐ Did the father really love the older son?
- ☐ ☐ Did the younger son's attitude change while he was away?
- ☐ ☐ Did the older brother's attitude change while his brother was away?
- ☐ ☐ Did the father's love change for either son?

6. What do you think the younger son now appreciated that he didn't before?

- a. his electric blanket
- b. his mother's cooking
- c. his monthly pocket money
- d. his own 10-speed bike
- e. the servants
- f. the parent's love
- g. his dad's advice
- h. his brother's friendship
- i. other _____

2. How long do you want to stay away?

- a. till breakfast
- b. for an hour
- c. until I get a new colour TV for my bedroom
- d. for ever
- e. until the hassle is over
- f. until things are on my terms
- g. other _____

3. How do you respond to your parents' authority when you think they made a bad decision (or one you didn't like)?

- a. throw a tantrum
- b. write to an agony column
- c. sulk in front of the TV
- d. try to talk it out
- e. go to my best friend and complain

GOING FURTHER

Obedience and Exasperation

Go back and read again the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11–32 and see if there are some lessons in the story for your life today.

1. If you had been the parent, how would you have responded to the two sons in this story? Complete each sentence with a word or phrase.

When the younger son asked for all his money, I would have. . . .

When the younger son ran away from home, I would have. . . .

When the younger son returned broke and grubby, I would have. . . .

When the older son refused to accept his younger brother, I would have. . . .

3. What does the Bible teach about family roles? From the passage below, jot down two things that the CHILD is commanded to do, and two things that the FATHER (parent) is commanded to do.

'Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honour your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—"that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

'Fathers, do not exasperate [frustrate] your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.'

- f. go out and buy a large anchovy pizza
- g. withdraw into my room
- h. get more frustrated
- i. other _____

4. The next time you have a hassle at home, what are some creative things you could do? Finish the sentences below.

I could. . . .

I should. . . .

When the older son accused me of being inconsistent, I would have. . . .

2. What are the obvious lessons you see in this story? Focus on the story and jot down one or two principles you see for dealing with hassles in the home. For instance: 'When the younger son ran away, the father did not run after him.'

THE CHILDREN ARE TO:

THE FATHER (PARENTS) ARE TO:

4. Who has the hardest responsibility? ☐ Children ☐ Father (parents)

5. Parenting is like coaching. Like parents, the coach is responsible for the overall success of the team. The coach teaches his players the basic skills and sends the players on to the field to perform. Some coaches yell and scream to get their players moving. Others never raise their voices. Some of the greatest coaches have been screamers. The test is—what motivates the team to get out there and win.

What kind of coach do you prefer?

- ☐ a yellor/screamer
- ☐ a cool one
- ☐ a patient teacher

- ☐ a former international player who gets out there with you
- ☐ someone with a degree in psychology
- ☐ a perfectionist

6. If you had to describe each of your parents as one of the kinds of coaches above, what would your father be? What would your mother be?

7. What are three areas where you have the greatest difficulty obeying your parents:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

8. Why does God say it is so important to learn to obey your parents?

9. What promise is given to children who learn to obey their parents?

Personal Application: Here are five suggestions for improving relationships with your parents. Pick the one that would be the most difficult for you to follow and figure out a specific step that you can take this week—to start improving your relationships with your parents.

1. **LISTEN** actively (instead of arguing)
2. **ACCEPT** advice (instead of giving it)
3. **DO** as your parents say (not necessarily as they do)
4. **RESPOND** to them as God's tools in your life (don't fight them)
5. **SUBMIT** to their ideas and plans (instead of trying to force your own will)

Of these five suggestions, the one I need to work on this week is. . . .

To improve in this area, I could. . . (jot down two or three things)

Killer Cliques

(Instructions in Leader's Guide)

WARM-UP

Famous Introductions

Select a person you do not know very well. Interview one another, taking notes about your partner. You have 1 minute to find out as much as possible. Then, your partner has 1 minute to interview you.

After 2 minutes, get together with your entire youth group and introduce each other. At the close, the youth group will vote on the 'zaniest' introduction—so look for some 'zany' things when you interview your partner. For instance:

- ☐ What do you enjoy doing for 'kicks'?
- ☐ What was your favourite TV show as a child?
- ☐ Do you like going to the zoo? What fascinates you there?
- ☐ If you got into the *Guinness Book of Records*, what would it be for?
- ☐ If you could marry a famous person, who would it be? Why?

VOTE BY YOUTH GROUP

1. What was the zaniest piece of information discovered?

STARTER BIBLE STUDY

Mr. Clean

Get together with someone from your C-Group and work together on the questions, after the Bible passage has been read.

LOOKING INTO THE STORY:

1. What was the disagreement between Jesus and his disciples and the Pharisees?

- a. the disciples were the dirty dozen
- b. the disciples didn't like soap
- c. the Pharisees had lost their American Express cards



- ☐ If you could live for a year anywhere in the world, where would it be?
- ☐ Where do you go when you want to be all alone?
- ☐ Do you take your teddy bear to bed with you?
- ☐ When was the first time you were kissed by someone outside the family?
- ☐ What is one thing you've tried that you never want to do again?

2. What was the most unusual thing you found out?

- d. Jews are clean people
- e. the religious rules required frequent hand-washings
- f. the disciples didn't use holy water
- g. the disciples ate with their fingers
- h. the Pharisees were 'old women'

The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered round Jesus and saw some of his disciples eating food with 'unclean'—that is, ceremonially unwashed—hands. (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. When they come from the market-place they do not eat unless they wash. . . .)

So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, 'Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with "unclean" hands?'

He replied, 'Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

"These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men." You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men.'

And he said to them: 'You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!'

Mark 7:1-9

2. Why were Jews so concerned about clean hands before eating?

- a. cholera was a deadly disease in the Middle East
- b. dirty hands revealed a dirty heart
- c. Jews like clean machines
- d. they manufactured the wash-basins
- e. cleanliness was considered necessary for godliness
- f. their rules required washing before meals

3. Why were the Pharisees such a tight group—a clique?

- a. had the same coloured T-shirts
- b. shared the same tent in the wilderness
- c. had the same ethnic pride
- d. had status as 'teachers' of the law
- e. were a privileged group by birth
- f. were on the same football team
- g. all liked to race camels

4. Why was Jesus so angry with the Pharisees?

- a. there was no mustard for his corned beef
- b. the Pharisees missed the point of his teaching
- c. they were disobedient to God's Word
- d. they had excluded others—they had become a clique
- e. other _____

5. Using the example of the Pharisees, how would you define a clique? Finish the sentence: 'A clique is. . . .'

MY OWN STORY: Complete the questionnaire on your own.

1. When you have been left out or cut off by a group of people, how did it make you feel? Think about a particular time you were left out of a group and tick two feelings that describe how you felt at this time.

- ☐ angry
- ☐ put down
- ☐ hurt
- ☐ uncomfortable
- ☐ outcast
- ☐ devastated
- ☐ depressed
- ☐ unwanted
- ☐ insecure
- ☐ idiot

2. What experience or group were you thinking about in question number one? (If you do not want to jot down the group, put the initials.)

3. If you were Jesus, write two rules you think all groups should follow—to avoid becoming a clique. (Look back to Jesus' words if you need to.)

RULE 1:

RULE 2:

4. How do you think Jesus might finish these sentences:

- ☐ The purpose of a Christian group is to:
- ☐ Being a part of a Christian group is great as long as your attitude isn't:

GOING FURTHER

Here Comes the Judge

The Pharisees were the religious establishment of their day. They were well known, respected, and had power in the community. Because of their education and power, they tended to be cliquish. They excluded others from their group. They were negative and judgemental of others who were not as good as they were. Jesus saved his harshest words for them.

'Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use (on others), it will be measured to you.'

'Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.'

Matthew 7:1–5

1. What does Jesus mean by 'plank'?

- a. floor board
- b. diving board
- c. big board of wood
- d. wooden paddle

2. Why is it difficult to see others accurately with a plank in your own eye?

- a. it blocks your peripheral vision
- b. it's a pain in the neck
- c. it tends to blind you
- d. your sunglasses have to be so big
- e. it warps your own vision

3. Jesus was poking fun at judgemental people with his remarks. His picture of a person with a plank in his or her eye is a gross exaggeration. What point was he trying to make? Express that point in 10 words or less.

4. Do you tend to see the same faults in others that you have in your own life?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Can't say

5. Sometimes, even among Christians, there are cliques. This was true in the church in Corinth in the first century. The apostle Paul wrote this appeal to them:

'I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."'

1 Corinthians 1:10–12

'Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men?

'What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labour. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.'

1 Corinthians 3:1–9

What caused the cliques within the church in Corinth?

- a. competition for the best seats at the chariot races
- b. jealousy between the leaders
- c. undue loyalty to different leaders
- d. spiritual pride
- e. spiritual immaturity

How did Paul, the writer of this letter, feel about the situation?

- a. angry
- b. disappointed and let down
- c. wonderful
- d. pleased about one group's compliments

What does Paul say is the way to overcome cliques among Christians?

Personal Application: Jesus gave a 'new commandment' to his disciples. Read his words over carefully and think about the half-finished sentences below. Then, jot down the name of one person outside of your close circle of friends that you would like to reach out to this week, with God's help.

'A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.'

John 13:34–35

With my non-Christian friends I need to be more. . .

With other Christians who do not agree with me, I need to be more. . .

With God's help, I am going to reach out beyond my close friends this week to. . . (write in the name of the person or group.)

Breaking Up

(Instructions in Leader's Guide)

C-GROUP WARM-UP

Fruit Picking

How would you evaluate the positive qualities in your life? Read over the Bible passage. Then rank yourself on each of the fruits of the Spirit circling a number from 1 to 10—1 being very weak (spoiled fruit) and 10 being very strong (ripe and delicious).

'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.'
Galatians 5:22-23

For example: For LOVE you might circle 8 because you feel that you are sensitive and caring but you could do even better.



LOVE: I am quick to sense the needs of my friends, classmates, and family; I try to respond as Christ would in giving of myself.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



GOODNESS: I have a real desire to live a clean life, to set a good example by my conduct wherever I am; I want to be God's man/woman.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



JOY: I can celebrate life even in the midst of pain and confusion because of my spiritual faith in Christ.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



FAITHFULNESS: I stick to my word; I stand up for my friends; I can be counted on to stay firm in my commitments to God and others; I am loyal.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



PEACE: I have an inner confidence in God's care of my life that keeps me from feeling up-tight and nervous.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



GENTLENESS: I have an inner strength that permits me to be gentle in my relationships with others; aware of my own abilities without having to make a show of them. I can respond easily and warmly.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



PATIENCE: I have a staying power that helps me to handle frustration and conflict without blowing my top when people act like idiots.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



KINDNESS: I act toward my friends, classmates, and family as I want them to act toward me—warm, considerate, generous with praise—always trying to see the best in others.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



SELF-CONTROL: I am learning to discipline my time, energy, and desires to reflect my spiritual values and beliefs; I am in control of my mouth, my appetites, and my actions.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

DISCUSSION (For C-Groups)

- Where did you mark yourself (a) highest and (b) lowest?
- Where would you rank the person sitting on your right the highest? (What 'fruit' in this list is the most obvious to you in their life?)
- Where would you rank the person sitting on your left the highest?
- On the whole, what 'fruit' would best characterise your entire C-Group?

STARTER BIBLE STUDY

Lord, I Got Hurt

Get together with one person from your C-Group and work on the two case histories below: (1) a modern-day story, and (2) a biblical story.

CASE HISTORY 1: Scott and Jane.

Scott and Jane had been members of the same church for years. They had been going steady for two years when he received the shocking letter. She didn't love him any more. 'I don't think it is working out.'

Scott was deeply hurt. He withdrew into himself and 'played it safe' in all his relationships. When his friends tried to reach out to him, he drew back. 'I don't want to get burnt. . .again.'

Scott has not been hurt since then. . .but there is something missing in his life.

If you had been Scott, what would you have done?

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| a. the same thing | e. taken off for the mountains |
| b. had it out with Jane—face to face | f. got drunk |
| c. sent flowers and a kind note | g. gone to a friend for advice |
| d. found someone else right away to take her place | h. other _____ |

CASE HISTORY 2: Abram and Lot. (Abram and Lot were relatives. Lot's father was Abram's brother. When Lot's father died, Lot came to live with Abram. Abram brought Lot up and shared everything he had with Lot.)

Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together. And quarrelling arose between Abram's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot. . .

So Abram said to Lot, 'Let's not have any quarrelling, between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers. Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left.'

Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan (River) was well watered, like the garden of the Lord. . . So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company.

Genesis 13:5-11

LOOKING INTO THE STORY:

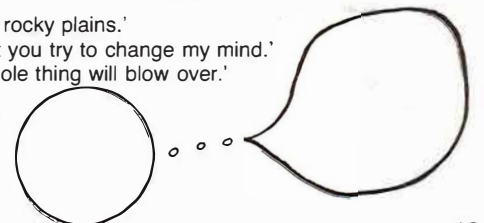
Respond to the following statements either TRUE or FALSE.

- T F Abram and Lot were both members of the 'family' of God.
 T F Abram and Lot decided to go into partnership and share all of their goods.
 T F Their relationship turned sour because Abram wanted everything his way.
 T F If Abram and Lot had been close to God, they could have ironed out their differences.
 T F When they could not resolve their differences, they did the next best thing.
 T F Abram gave Lot a rotten deal when they parted company.

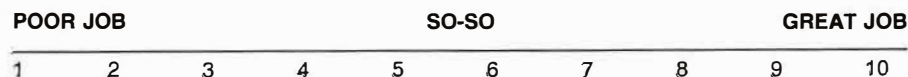
2. Which of the following statements best expresses what Abram said when this conflict arose? (Tick one)

- ☐ 'We've got to solve this problem here and now. You take whatever you want and I'll be satisfied with what you don't take.'
☐ 'I'll take the fertile land and you take the rocky plains.'
☐ 'This is what we're going to do and don't you try to change my mind.'
☐ 'Let's just play it cool and maybe this whole thing will blow over.'

3. How do you think that Lot felt about Abram's proposal to stop the conflict? (Draw in the appropriate 'face' in the circle and write Lot's thoughts in the think-bubble.)



4. How would you rate Abram's ability to face conflicts and to handle them well? (Indicate on the graph.)



5. What quality really stands out in Abram's life when it comes to solving conflicts?

MY OWN STORY: Complete the rest of the questions on your own.

1. When it comes to breaking up with friends, how would you rate yourself? (Circle a number somewhere in between UGLY GOOD-BYE. . . and BEAUTIFUL GOOD-BYE.)



2. When you break up with a close friend (or go your separate ways), what do you do? (Circle two.)

- don't talk to him/her
- feel guilty
- feel bad
- deliberately try to avoid him/her
- talk badly about them to others
- wish him/her well
- leave on a friendly note
- ask if there is anything I have done to hurt them
- leave the door open for continued friendship

3. What is a quality you see in Abram that you would like to have in your own life? Finish the sentence: 'The thing I like about the way Abram handled the conflict with Lot is. . .'

4. How do you handle 'break-ups' within your own youth group? Respond to the following statements by putting an 'x' on the line somewhere in between TOTALLY AGREE and TOTALLY DISAGREE.

	TOTALLY AGREE	TOTALLY DISAGREE
Christians should treat each other as brothers and sisters 'in Christ';		
Young Christians are often 'turned off' because of the way they are hurt in a youth group.		
There should be a law against 'pairing off' at youth group functions.		
Going steady can be harmful to your spiritual health.		
Break-ups are a part of life and Christians have to deal with them.		

GOING FURTHER

Break-Ups in the Christian Family

The Bible has a lot to say about dealing with 'broken' relationships between Christians. Get back together with your partner and work on this questionnaire.

1. What is to be the goal for relationships between Christians?

'... I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.'

Ephesians 4:1-3

The goal of the Christian life is to live a life that is:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> crummy | <input type="checkbox"/> scary | <input type="checkbox"/> worthwhile |
| <input type="checkbox"/> boring | <input type="checkbox"/> exciting | <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ |

2. What are five characteristics or qualities we are to practise with other Christians?

- | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ | 3. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 5. _____ | |

3. What are Christians supposed to do when disputes arise?

'Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbour for we are all members of one body. In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.'

Ephesians 4:25-27

Answer the following statements TRUE or FALSE based on the verses above.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| T | F | A Christian has the right to treat another Christian in any way he/she pleases. |
| T | F | If you have been hurt by another Christian, you have the right to write this person off for good. |
| T | F | The best way to deal with hurt feelings is to have it out with the other person. |
| T | F | It is a sign of spiritual immaturity to get angry. |
| T | F | Anybody who shows his feelings is weak. |
| T | F | If you have been hurt by another Christian, sleep on it and it will go away. |
| T | F | If you hide your feelings, sooner or later they will come back to haunt you. |

4. How in the world is a Christian supposed to live this 'new' kind of life?

'Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery [excess]. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.'

Ephesians 5:18

'Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.'

Galatians 5:25

What does 'getting drunk' with wine have to do with 'being filled' with the Spirit? List two comparisons.

When you are drunk with wine, you are. . .

When you are filled with the Spirit, you are. . .

Why is 'being filled with the Holy Spirit' the first step in dealing with broken relationships?

5. What is the second step in dealing with broken relationships?

'Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs. . . that it may benefit those who listen.'

Ephesians 4:29

Finish the sentence: After we have turned over our lives to the Holy Spirit, the next step in healing 'broken relationships' is to. . .

Personal Application: Read over the verses below for any special message that God has for you in dealing with 'broken relationships' among Christians.

'... do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.'

Ephesians 4:30-32

How would you answer these questions?

- | |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> What are the things that 'grieve' the Holy Spirit? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> What are the things that bring out the Holy Spirit in our life and the lives of others? |

What is one 'broken relationship' in your life right now that needs to be mended?

Power Games

(Instructions in Leader's Guide)

C-GROUP WARM-UP

Power Hour

Here's a chance for you to prove your skills in different types of power. The leader will give you the rules for this contest. Keep score for each test.



SCOREBOARD

	Team A	Team B	Team C	Team D	Team E
PHYSICAL					
King of the Ring					
Arm Wrestling					
Laughing Contest					
VERBAL					
Tongue Twister					
Breath Contest					
INTELLECTUAL					
IQ Test					
Spelling Bee					
Totals					

IQ TEST

- Does America have a November 5th? Yes No
- Why can't a man living in Scotland be buried south of the border?
- If you had a match and entered a room in which there was a kerosene lamp, an oil heater, and a wood-burning stove, which would you light first?
- Some months have 30 days, some have 31 days; how many months have 28 days?
- A woman gives a beggar 50p. The woman is the beggar's sister, but the beggar is not the woman's brother. How come?
- How many animals of each species did Moses take with him aboard the ark?
- Is it legal in Ireland for a man to marry his widow's sister?
- Where was the apostle Paul going on the road to Damascus?

STARTER BIBLE STUDY

The First and Final Conflict

After the Bible passage has been read (Gen. 1-3), get together with one other from your C-Group and work on the questions under 'Looking into the Story'. (The passage is in the *Leader's Guide*.)

LOOKING INTO THE STORY: The first people to have a conflict with authority were Adam and Eve. In that initial conflict, we can see a great many of the elements that make up our conflicts with authority.

1. Who is the authority over Adam and Eve?

As their authority, what does he ask them to do?

- to live a hard and miserable life
- to build mud pies
- to live in fellowship with him, enjoying and caring for his creation
- to eat wild nuts and berries

2. According to your observations, answer the following statements either TRUE or FALSE.

- T F God placed a whole bunch of restrictions on Adam and Eve.
- T F God is keen on rules and regulations.
- T F God put only one limitation on Adam and Eve.
- T F God installed electric fences and mechanical watchdogs around the Garden of Eden to keep Adam and Eve from escaping.

3. What one thing did God ask Adam and Eve to do?

4. What did God say would happen if they broke this rule?

- They would get a stomach ache from eating green fruit
- They would break out in spots
- They would be thrown to the wolves
- They would die.

5. What is the serpent's (power of evil) strategy? (Tick the correct statements)

- ☐ to hypnotise Eve into doing his will
- ☐ to implant mind-controlling devices into their brains
- ☐ to get Eve to question God's words
- ☐ to blast them into the cosmic void
- ☐ to get Eve to question God's motives for telling them what to do
- ☐ to cry until he (the serpent) gets his way

6. When God confronted Adam and Eve with their disobedience, what did they do? (Tick correct statements)

- ☐ admitted they were wrong and asked forgiveness
- ☐ Adam blamed Eve, and God too for creating her
- ☐ Eve blamed the serpent for deceiving her
- ☐ took a lie-detector test

7. What were some of the consequences of their disobedience?

(Match the consequences with the appropriate person by drawing a line between them.)

PERSONS

Adam

Eve

Serpent

CONSEQUENCES

- ☐ Would eventually be crushed
- ☐ Would return to dust
- ☐ Would have pain in childbirth
- ☐ Would crawl on his belly
- ☐ Responsible for the ground being cursed

Adam and Eve had conflict with authority—the consequences of which have affected us all. As we take a more personal look at our own conflicts with authority, you may want to consider the similarities between our actions and theirs.

MY OWN STORY: Complete the rest of these questions on your own.

1. Write down three or four of the authorities in your life (such as teachers, parents, police)

Tick the one or two with which you have most conflict.

2. What are some of the things that cause these conflicts?

- | | |
|---|--|
| a. rules/limitations | e. treated like a child |
| b. can't go where I like | f. different point of view/values/ethics |
| c. caught between friends and these authorities | g. others trying to play God |
| d. my rights/personal freedom denied | h. other _____ |
| | i. other _____ |

3. What do you do when you have a conflict with someone in authority over you? (Put a dot on the line—somewhere between the two extremes—to indicate your response.)

	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY
I admit it if I did something wrong	_____	_____	_____
I keep my mouth shut	_____	_____	_____
I blame it on someone else	_____	_____	_____
I try to talk my way out of it	_____	_____	_____

4. Why should we obey our authorities? Mark the following statements TRUE or FALSE.

- T F** because they are bigger and stronger than we are.
T F because they have had the benefit of more experience than we have.
T F because they are uglier than we are.
T F because they have been given responsibility and are accountable to a higher authority for what they do.
T F because they are trying to protect us from harm.
T F because they are Gorkons from Planet X.

5. In the next week, what relationship with an authority figure would you like to work on?

We all experience conflicts with authority from time to time. We need to realise that God desires to use these people to protect and guide us, and we should, therefore, give them our respect and obedience.

GOING FURTHER

The Umbrella of Authority

Ever since Adam and Eve, we have had to deal with the issue of authority at some time or another. Our perspective on authority and authority figures in our lives has a great deal to do with how we respond to authority.

'Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgement on themselves.' Romans 13:1-2

1. From this verse, how would you define 'authority figure'?

2. Would you say that there is any person in authority over you whom God has not allowed to be there?

If 'yes', who is it?

- a. Yes b. No c. Not sure

3. Respond to the following statements by putting a dot somewhere on the line between AGREE and DISAGREE.

	AGREE	DISAGREE
God speaks through many 'authority figures' to help and direct us.	_____	_____
It's OK to be 'slack' in obeying mum or dad, but not God.	_____	_____
We should have the same respect for the 'authority figure' as we have for God.	_____	_____

4. If God has had something to do with appointing people to be 'in authority' over me, what should be my attitude towards them, and their attitude towards me?

'Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.' 1 Peter 2:13-14

KEY CONCEPT: It is important for us to see those in authority over us as our 'protective umbrella' rather than the 'bad guys'.

5. What happens if someone in authority over you goes totally against what God said? Look at Peter and John's reply after they were commanded by the 'temple authorities' not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus any more.

'But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you (the Jewish rulers) rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." Acts 4:19-20

What did Peter and John do in this case?

- a. told the Jewish rulers they would comply
b. said they would buy them each a Mars bar
c. told the Jewish rulers that they were bound by a 'higher' authority
d. they said nothing at all

Is it right to obey an authority over you (parents, government, etc.) if they go totally against what God has said?

☐ Yes ☐ No Why?

Personal Application: Viewing those in authority over us as our 'protective umbrella' rather than the 'bad guys' really sheds a whole new light on this issue of authority. They are there to help us...not hurt us. The apostle Paul says to Timothy, his 'son in the faith'...

'I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.' 1 Timothy 2:1-2

Look again at your own 'protective umbrella'. What specifically could you pray for concerning the following authority figures if they apply to you? Finish the sentences below:

For my parents, I ask...

For my teachers/minister/youth leader, I ask...

Take time this week to pray for those in authority over you and the responsibility they have for guiding you. Be thankful for the 'protective umbrella' that God has provided for you. Remember, even though it doesn't always seem so, those in authority over you are put there by God to help you and not to hurt you.

Why This, Lord?

(Instructions in Leader's Guide)

C-GROUP WARM-UP

God Is. . . .

When you think of God, what flashes across your mind? What images or pictures help to explain God as you have experienced him?

The leader will give you four slips of paper and will explain how this guessing game is played.

ROUND 1: What colour comes to mind when you think of God? (Such as *white* because God is pure; or *purple* because he is like royalty.)

Write a colour on one of your slips of paper and place the paper in the bowl in the centre of your group.

Then, one at a time, ask one of your group to draw a slip of paper from the bowl, read it, and let everyone try to guess who wrote it. Then, ask the author to 'confess' and explain why he or she sees God this way.

Then, draw another slip of paper and repeat, etc.

ROUND 2: What animal comes the closest to portraying God for you? (Such as *lion*, because he is all powerful and bold.)

Write the name of the animal on the second slip of paper and place in the bowl. Draw out the slips. Read. . . and have everyone guess who the author is, etc.

ROUND 3: What song illustrates your thought about God? (Such as *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*.)

ROUND 4: What car comes to mind when you think of God? (Such as *Rolls Royce*, because God is reliable.)

STARTER BIBLE STUDY

Why This, Lord?

Paul stands out in the New Testament as a man who had some problems. Listen to the hassles he described. Then, get together with someone from your C-Group and work on the questionnaire.

. . . there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he (God) said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'

Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecution, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

LOOKING INTO THE STORY:

1. What are four good reasons Paul could give for asking, 'Why this, Lord?'

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

(d) _____

2. Paul 'delighted in weakness' because:

- a. he was a sissy
- b. he had been handicapped from birth
- c. he was into 'positive thinking'
- d. he was into self-destruction
- e. he was depressed
- f. he understood the purposes of weakness
- g. he couldn't understand it

3. What was the apostle Paul really feeling inside when he wrote these words? (Circle one in each category.)

anxiety _____ contentment

doubt _____ confidence

joy _____ depression

forgotten _____ God knows what he's doing

self-pity _____ praise for God

4. What do you think Paul meant by his 'thorn in the flesh'?

- a. a real thorn in his hand
- b. extreme shyness
- c. some physical problem
- d. bad eyesight
- e. something that kept him always defeated
- f. a nagging wife or friend
- g. a horrible temper
- h. a difficult situation he had to live with

5. Is it wrong to ask God to get you out of a handicap or problem?

- a. yes
- b. always
- c. don't know
- d. never
- e. sometimes
- f. all of the above

6. How did God answer Paul's request for relief from whatever was hassling him?

- a. God ignored his pleas
- b. he sent angels
- c. he removed the thorn in the flesh
- d. he let him sweat it out
- e. he promised relief in the future
- f. he gave Paul strength to cope
- g. he told him it was good for him
- h. he said pain was a great character builder
- i. he said, 'I am with you through it all'

7. What was Paul really trying to say in this Bible passage? Next to each statement below, jot down one of the following codes/symbols:

- F = FORGET it: this is NOT the point
- R = REMEMBER this: you may need this principle
- S = SUPER IMPORTANT: don't ever forget this

- ____ God helps those who help themselves
- ____ Difficult circumstances don't hinder what God wants to do
- ____ There is a purpose to everything—even pain
- ____ God loves you and has a plan for your life
- ____ God is in control of all of life, and he is gracious, loving, and kind
- ____ When you take your eyes off God, the circumstances appear overwhelming
- ____ God provides a way to cope with problems and pain
- ____ When we really trust God all of our problems will fade away

MY OWN STORY:

1. When are you most apt to say: 'Why me, Lord?' (choose three)

- | | |
|--|--|
| a. when my brother/sister steals my hair-dryer or comb | h. when nobody understands me |
| b. when I lose in an important game | i. when my parents are fighting |
| c. when my hands sweat holding hands | j. when we have to move |
| d. when I don't understand what's happening | k. when my close friend dies |
| e. when nobody phones all evening | m. when the teacher asks me a question and I've not prepared |
| f. when I ache all over | n. when I look in the mirror |
| g. when I'm emotionally drained | o. when I get a 'Dear John' letter |
| | p. when I mess up a test |

2. What types of problems are most difficult to handle? Rank the following ones in order of difficulty from 1 to 5.

- ___ weaknesses: physical limitations or problems
- ___ insults: verbal abuse by others
- ___ hardships: difficult circumstances—financial or physical
- ___ persecutions: direct opposition from others
- ___ difficulties: trouble and tension at home, with friends or important relationships

3. In the last 12 months, what are three situations that have caused you to feel inside: 'Why this, Lord?' (such as breaking your leg at the beginning of the holidays)?

Now go back and code each situation with one of these symbols in the margin:

Draw a person () if it involves a person outside your home.

Draw a house () if it involves your home life or a family member.

Draw a star () if it has to do with a sudden happening or accident.

GOING FURTHER

I've got some plans for you!

If you have ever questioned God, 'Why me, Lord?' you will be in good company because everyone has felt this way at one time or another.

The prophet Jeremiah in the old Testament was known as the 'weeping' prophet because he did so much 'crying' out to God because of all the evil in his nation. Each time he cried out to God, God gave him a 'vision' of the 'big picture'. Listen to one of these visions and think about the questions that follow.

'This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: 'Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message.' So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.'

Then the word of the Lord came to me: 'O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?' declares the Lord. 'Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand...'

Jeremiah 18:1-6

1. What is Jeremiah 'weeping' about in this passage?

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. he lost a fortune at Las Vegas | d. he saw terrible things going on in his |
| b. his coffee pot had got broken | country that caused him to question |
| c. he felt that God must be asleep on 'the job | whether God was in control |

2. In a few words, how does God respond to Jeremiah's complaint?

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. When things are bad, they are tough all over | d. The clay has no right to tell the potter what to do |
| b. The potter knows what he's doing | e. Sometimes we don't see the beauty of the pot when it is being shaped and reshaped on the wheel |
| c. Sometimes a potter (God) has to try several times before he gets it right | |

Later on Jeremiah uses these words to explain God's purpose and plan for our lives—some of the most beautiful words in the Bible:

'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,' declares the Lord.

Jeremiah 29:11-14a

3. In your own words, what do these verses say about God's plans for our lives?

When things, events, people come into your life that seem to harm you rather than help you, what are you to keep in mind?

Personal Application: Paul, too, believed that God has everything under control and that he is at work for the best. Paul wrote in Romans 8:28:

'And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.'

The key is in the last four words: 'according to his purpose.' To understand what his purpose is, check these verses:

'Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies, as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—which is your spiritual worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by 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.'

Romans 12:1-2

Note the three steps to Paul's logic: (1) **REALISE** what God has done for you, (2) **DEDICATE** your body, and (3) **TRANSFORM** your mind.

On what basis should you offer yourself to God?

When should you make this offering?

What does it mean to offer yourself as a 'living sacrifice'?

Is there any reason at this present time that you should NOT want to commit your life to God totally and completely? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If 'Yes' what exactly is holding you back?

If 'No', what do you say about making it right now?

When you realise God's mercy is rich and when you are willing to give him 100% and when your mind is being transformed, you've got a lot going for you!

Breaking Free

(Instructions in Leader's Guide)

C-GROUP WARM-UP

Truth and Consequences

In Session 1 you decided how many aspirins you would need for various conflicts. Well, today let's think through ways of handling those different conflicts and the consequences that follow.

Listed on the left are different remedies for conflicts. Match them up with some of their consequences from the choices on the right. (There can be more than one choice.)

Then, with your partner, come up with one more consequence that may result from the choice. Be creative.

For example:

DFMN get drunk

- | | |
|--|---|
| _____ 1. yell and scream | A. too expensive |
| _____ 2. lose yourself in a video game | B. is a version of a kid's game |
| _____ 3. run and hide | C. causes laryngitis |
| _____ 4. pray about it | D. gets you in trouble with the law |
| _____ 5. take drugs | E. is especially hard if you are proud |
| _____ 6. get an ulcer | F. makes you look awfully stupid |
| _____ 7. tell your friends all about it, as long as your story makes you look totally innocent | G. gets the most powerful force in the world on your side |
| _____ 8. back out | H. takes a long time, but is worth it in the long run |
| _____ 9. murder the person causing the problem | I. makes you fat |
| _____ 10. admit you blew it and apologise | J. is too painful |
| _____ 11. try to escape reality by reading slushy romance novels | K. is a constructive way of handling conflict |
| _____ 12. jump off the Post Office Tower | L. causes nightmares about being eaten alive by Pac-Man |
| | M. gives you a twisted view of reality |
| | N. just makes the problem bigger |

STARTER BIBLE STUDY

A New Look at Conflicts

After the Bible passage has been read, get together again with your partner and work on the questions under 'Looking into the Story'.

Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.

It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of good will. The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defence of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful honour for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me. *Philippians 1:12-26*

LOOKING INTO THE STORY:

- What was Paul's reaction to being in chains? (tick one) ☐ he rejoiced ☐ he got a bad case of measles ☐ he collapsed in a faint ☐ he gave up
- Apparently Paul was chained to a guard almost constantly, with guards probably being rotated at 12-hour intervals. How could this situation advance the gospel? (circle one)
 - Paul pinned tracts to the backs of the guards' coats
 - Paul was able to share Christ with many of the guards
 - Paul dragged his guard to church
 - Paul could see the guards as notice boards
- Fill in the blanks of the following paragraph, using the word list below: ☐ Paul's ☐ believers ☐ chained ☐ encouraged ☐ death ☐ Barry Manilow ☐ cheese sauce ☐ depressed.

Because of _____ example, the Roman Christians were _____ to share Christ more openly. The fact that he was _____ to a guard and faced possible _____ didn't stop Paul, and that was really a challenge to the _____ there.

- Not everyone was sharing Christ from a good motive. Some were motivated by: (tick appropriate statements) ☐ envy ☐ their excitement about facing persecution ☐ selfish ambition ☐ their great love for God ☐ their desire to cause trouble for Paul ☐ coupons for free hamburgers.

- We know that Paul rejoiced in the fact that the gospel was being advanced, despite the difficulty of his personal circumstances. What other kinds of reactions could he have had? For example: 'He could have become very defensive.'

- Even though Paul was ready to die for Christ, he felt that God would free him so that... (circle one)
 - he would be able to enter the AD 84 Olympics
 - he could lead a revolt against the Romans
 - he could start a chain of video arcades
 - he could go on helping other Christians

MY OWN STORY: Finish the questions on your own

Paul was in chains for Christ. It was an unpleasant situation, to say the least, and carried with it the potential for a very cruel death. Despite all this, Paul's attitude was positive. He had a God-centred perspective on his conflicts. He believed God was in control of his life, and would work through conflicts both to better him as a person and further the cause of Christ. Believing this, Paul could find inner joy in serving God, no matter what the circumstances. Take the example of Paul and relate it to your own hassles in relationships or your own set of conflicts. Looking at them as the apostle Paul did may give you a whole new perspective—one that will bring strength, joy, and peace.

- 1. Turn back to page 5 and retake the test that you took at the beginning of this course. This time, put an 'x' on the line to indicate how you handle hassles.
- 2. Where have you shown the greatest progress (in a relationship, situation, or attitude—specifically)?
- 3. Where have you shown the least progress?
- 4. How would the apostle Paul probably respond to this hassle—in your own words?
- 5. Jot down two or three things you could do to change this situation/hassle or at least your attitude about it.

A CONTRACT
Mutual Support Covenant

Are you willing to enter into a contract with the others in your C-Group:

- ☐ for the next 30 days;
- ☐ to seek to support one another in the hassle/conflict that you are experiencing;
- ☐ to phone or call on every member in your C-group at least once a week for the next 30 days to see how they are getting along.

If you are willing to enter into this covenant with one another—for 30 days, pass around your books and give each other your phone number.

NAME	PHONE NUMBER

Serendipity groups are Bible Study groups that care. They are made up of people who want to take God seriously in their lives. At the centre of the group life is the study of Scripture – but study that takes the biblical teaching and relates it firmly to the lives of the group members. Through this study and the shared life of the group, with its emphasis on care, support, encouragement and celebration, Christians will grow and develop, and are prepared for Christian service.

This series, especially prepared for young people, contains nine student books and three manuals for leaders:

STARTERS: On Becoming a Christian
KNOWING ME: On My Identity
X-CERTIFICATE: On Moral Questions
THE WAY AHEAD: On Discipleship
BELONGING: On Deep Friendships
TORN BETWEEN: On My Lifestyle
DIRECTIONS: On What I Believe
HASSLES: On Relationships
FRONT LINE: On Tough Issues

The authors, Lyman Coleman and Denny Rydberg, have been involved in Christian youth work in the States for many years. For Lyman Coleman, the Serendipity model of group Bible study is the fruit of twenty years of thinking and experience. Denny Rydberg works as a consultant and writer and has considerable experience in writing and publishing youth programmes and magazines.

Scripture Union

ISBN 0 86201 200 7

Rec. Retail Price 65p