

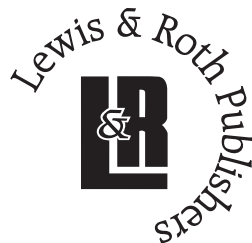
Study Guide for

IF YOU BITE & DEVOUR
ONE ANOTHER

Galatians 5:15

Biblical Principles for Handling Conflict

Alexander Strauch



If You Bite & Devour One Another Study Guide

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Lesson 1

Act in the Spirit

This lesson covers pages 7 to 22 of *If You Bite & Devour One Another*.
Read these pages before doing the lesson.

Begin your session by reading the passages below:

Galatians 5:15: *“But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.”*

Galatians 5:25-26: *“If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.”*

1 Corinthians 3:3: *“For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?”*

Answer the following questions:

1. Explain the sad irony of the Chapel Hill Church’s fight over altar calls. (This is an example of dramatic irony, a situation where an audience or observer can more clearly interpret the meaning of the events than the people involved. As we read their story, we can see and understand something about their behavior that they cannot see or refuse to acknowledge.)
2. List two reasons why born-again, Bible-believing Christians should be better able to handle conflict than non-Christians? Explain your answers.

3. The theme of Chapter 1, “Act in the Spirit,” lays the foundation for the rest of the book. Briefly, in your own words, explain the major point (or theme) of this chapter. It is important that you can clearly explain the theme of this chapter.

4. What does Paul mean by the term “flesh” in Galatians 5:13-6:8? See the Appendix (page 155) at the back of the book.

5. a. In the left column, list the eight social sins from the list of “the works of the flesh” (Galatians 5:19-21). In the right column, list the eight social sins of 2 Corinthians 12:20. Take special note that the first four terms listed in 2 Corinthians 12:20 are the same Greek words that appear in Paul’s list in Galatians 5:20: (1) “quarreling” = “strife”; (2) “jealousy,” (3) “anger” = “fits of anger”; and (4) “hostility” = “rivalries.” These words should have been translated by the English Standard Version the same in both lists to avoid confusion. Thus there are four different items in the 2 Corinthians 12:20 list. There are a total of twelve different terms listed in these two passages.

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b. Which vices do you think cause most conflicts? Explain your answers. (For a definition of each of these social sins of the flesh visit the “online resources” section of www.lewisandroth.org.)

- c. When we are engaged in conflict, why is it essential that we stop and think about these eight sinful vices of the flesh?
- d. Consider the story of the people who contentiously voted to fire their pastor and then jumped for joy (page 17). What “works of the flesh” do you think they displayed?
6. According to 1 Corinthians 3:3-4, what is Paul’s chief complaint against the Christians in the church at Corinth?
7. The author gives considerable space in this chapter to talking about the presence of the Holy Spirit, walking in the Spirit, and the fruit of the Spirit. Why is a discussion of the Spirit relevant to a book about conflict? Give as many reasons as you can.
8. The author discusses “self-control,” the last of “the fruit of the Spirit,” in great length later in the book. After reading just this first chapter, why do you think self-control is so absolutely essential to handling conflict in a constructive way?

9. Self-control greatly impacts how we handle conflict. Spend some time meditating on the other fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23. Besides self-control, which three do you think are most needed when conflict erupts? Explain your answers.

10. a. List the beautiful character traits of the “wisdom from above” (James 3:17).

b. If there is one trait or virtue that you would like to see developed more fully in your life, which one would it be? Explain your answer.

c. Consider the story of the people who contentiously voted out of the church their pastor and then jumped for joy (page 17). What two traits of “the wisdom from above” are clearly lacking in their behavior?

11. If there is division in a local church among the believers over the use of altar calls, how do you think a church can resolve this dispute without splitting into two hostile and separate churches?

b. Write out the fifteen descriptions of love in two columns (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). In the left column list the positive qualities of love and in the right column the negative statements, what love is not. (For a definition of each of the fifteen descriptions of love, visit the “online resources” section of www.lewisandroth.org.)

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c. Why does Paul list eight sinful vices, explaining what love does not do?

d. According to James, what commonly causes fights and quarrels among believers (James 4:1-3)?

3. In the context of discussing 1 Corinthians 13, what does the author mean by the statement, “Decide beforehand how you should respond toward those with whom you disagree” (page 26)?

4. a. Explain the principal of nonretaliation and how it helps temper most conflicts (Matthew 5:39; 1 Corinthians 4:12-13; Romans 12:17; 1 Peter 3:9; 2:23).

b. There is almost nothing more difficult than to resist the natural passion for revenge after being wronged or emotionally hurt. The flesh loves the feeling of payback. It may help you to resist revenge if you consider all the benefits of non-retaliation. List several benefits of non-retaliation.

c. Can you give an illustration of how nonretaliation helped you to deal biblically and constructively with a conflict?

5. a. Paul and Barnabas had a sharp disagreement and went their separate ways, forming two evangelistic teams. What positive lessons do we learn from this account in Acts 15:36-41 about handling conflict?

b. What other vitally important lessons do we learn about conflict in general from this sad account in Acts 15:36-41? Think about this question and meditate on the Acts 15:36-41 passage.

6. In what ways does prayer play a major role in handling conflict in a constructive, godly way? List as many ideas as you can.

7. a. In what ways does impatience worsen conflict?

b. In what ways does forbearance handle conflict constructively?

8. List two practical ways in which loving acts of kindness temper conflict.

9. a. What does the statement, “love covers a multitude of sins,” mean (1 Peter 4:8)?

b. Can you think of an example of bad behavior that should be covered by love in order to lessen or eliminate conflict?

c. List one example of a situation where love does not cover, but must expose a sin or failure.

10. List one modern day example of disputed matters (or matters of conscience) that cause disagreements or conflicts among true Christians (Romans 14:1-6, 15, 17, 20-21, 23). How would love handle such a conflict?
11. Using the verses below, what were the guiding principles in Paul's life for dealing with "disputed matters" and his glorious freedoms in Christ?
- a. Galatians 5:13-14

 - b. Romans 15:1-3

 - c. 1 Corinthians 10:24

 - d. 1 Corinthians 10:31-33
12. a. Explain the meaning of 1 John 3:18.

b. When heated, emotional conflict erupts, what is “the crucial question” we must always ask ourselves?

13. What does the final story about John, the apostle, teach us about handling conflict with love?

Lesson 3

Act in Humility

This lesson covers pages 39 to 50 of *If You Bite & Devour One Another*.
Read these pages before doing the lesson.

Begin your session by reading the passages below:

Ephesians 4:12: *“Walk . . . with all humility.”*

Philippians 2:3-4: *“In humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*

Philippians 2:5-6, 8: *“Christ Jesus . . . did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but . . . humbled himself.”*

1 Peter 5:5: *“Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’”*

Answer the following questions:

1. Define and explain what the word *humility* means. Humility is a cardinal Christian virtue, so be sure you understand what humility means. (For a detailed definition of this word, visit the “online resources” section of www.lewisandroth.org.)
2. Explain how a humble-minded person will handle conflict better than a proud-minded person.

3. a. Define the term *selfish ambition* (or *rivalry*).
 - b. Read 3 John 9-10 and explain how Diotrephes illustrates selfish ambition.
 - c. List three reasons why selfish ambition is deplorable in a Christian leader.
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4. a. Define the term *conceit*.
 - b. List as many reasons as you can as to why conceit hinders most conflicts from being resolved constructively.
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5. 1 Peter 5:5 is an extremely important passage of Scripture for our topic. There are many truths contained in this one verse. Break the passage apart and list all of the individual truths stated in this passage. (Note: Each word counts.)
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6. What does Paul mean by the phrase “count others more significant than yourselves” (Philippians 2:3)? Explain your answer in practical terms.

7. a. What does Christ's incarnation and death on the cross have to do with handling conflict and maintaining church unity?

 - b. Why is it essential to consider and meditate on Philippians 2:5-8, when you are trying to obey Philippians 2:3-4?
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8. How would you apply the account of Jesus washing the disciples' feet (John 13) to conflict and church unity?
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9. How does Paul demonstrate a humble attitude toward those who were preaching Christ out of rivalry in Philippians 1:15-18? Explain the situation and his response.
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10. The letter to the Philippians was read aloud to the congregation immediately after it was received. What do you think most convicted and challenged the Philippian believers after hearing the letter read? Explain your answer.

11. What does the following statement mean: *In the midst of a conflict, your attitude may be far more important to God than the issue you are debating.*

Lesson 4

Act the Anger

This lesson covers pages 51 to 62 of *If You Bite & Devour One Another*.
Read these pages before doing the lesson.

Begin your session by reading the passages below:

Proverbs 15:18: *“A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.”*

James 1:19-20: *“Let every person be . . . slow to anger, for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness that God requires.”*

Ephesians 4:26-27: *“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.”*

Answer the following questions:

1. Many conflicts are caused and/or perpetuated by poor communication between people. Explain how sinful anger seriously hinders good communication between people facing disagreement with one another. Give several examples of how anger hinders good communication.
2. a. According to the Old and New Testament passages presented in chapter four, what is a person like (in character and deed) who is slow to anger when engaged in conflict?

- b. What does the person who is slow to anger accomplish when engaged in conflict?
3. a. Explain both the quotation by Jonathan Edwards in footnote two and the following sentence by Alexander Strauch: “But anger (even for the cause of righteousness and truth) that is not controlled by the Holy Spirit and the principles of God’s Word, will destroy God’s people and the witness of the gospel” (page 53).
- b. Why is an understanding of these two quotations by Edwards and Strauch vitally important to grasp?
4. What does James mean by the statement, “for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness that God requires” (James 1:20)?
5. Explain each of the following statements from Ephesians 4:26-27. Especially focus in on the last statement (c) in verse 27.
- a. “Be angry and do not sin.”
- b. “Do not let the sun go down on your anger.”

c. “And give no opportunity to the devil.”

6. a. Explain the meaning of Proverbs 15:1.

b. Why do you think the author emphasizes the importance of knowing and practicing Proverbs 15:1?

7. What does the author mean when he writes: “Indeed, Christian growth in sanctification always involves putting off the ‘old self’ and putting on the ‘new self’” (page 57)?

8. Of the six suggestions for dealing with anger, which two were most helpful to you personally? Explain your answers.

9. The author gives the following suggestion on page 60:

If you struggle with anger, avail yourself of the help God provides. Start by studying what his Word says about anger. The Holy Spirit will use this knowledge to convict, correct, and transform you.

This is a very helpful suggestion for dealing with any particular sin that is troublesome to a believer (alcohol

Lesson 5

Control the Tongue

This lesson covers pages 63 to 76 of *If You Bite & Devour One Another*.
Read these pages before doing the lesson.

Begin your session by reading the passages below:

Proverbs 18:6: *“A fool’s lips walk into a fight, and his mouth invites a beating.”*

Ephesians 4:29-30: *“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths but only such as is good for building up And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.”*

James 1:26: *“If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person’s religion is worthless.”*

1 Timothy 4:12: *“Set the believers an example in speech.”*

Answer the following questions:

1. When conflict arises, the words we use matter a great deal. When engaged in conflict with others how can our words “grieve the Holy Spirit of God”? Read Ephesians 4:29-32 and give some examples.

2. James makes some of the most profound statements in the entire Bible on the evils of the uncontrolled tongue.
 - a. Using James 3:1-12, list his descriptions of the uncontrolled tongue.

- b. Which one of these descriptions (James 3:1-12) do you find most shocking and would most motivate you to work hard at controlling your tongue? Explain your answer.
3. James makes the mind-jolting statement that, “If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person’s religion is worthless” (James 1:26). What does James mean by saying, “this person’s religion is worthless”?
4. Why is being a good listener essential to dealing with conflict constructively (James 1:19)? Give as many reasons as you can.
5. The Bible says, “Set the believers an example in speech” (1 Timothy 4:12; also Titus 2:7-8). We desperately need good role models of godly speech.
- a. List the traits of destructive speech, as described by the author on pages 68-73, that believers need to banish from their speech.
- b. List the traits of godly, Spirit-produced speech that believers need to cultivate and present as a model for others to follow.
6. Why do you think the author so strongly warns against the use of exaggerated, inflammatory speech? List as many reasons as you can.

10. Using the following texts of Scripture, what remarkable things are we able to accomplish when we use gentle, gracious words in our dealings with people (Proverbs 12:18, 25; 16:21, 24; 25:15; Ephesians 4:29)?

11. Why is truthfulness essential to constructive speech and why must it be an essential aspect of gracious speech?

12. There are times that Paul uses stern, pointed terminology when speaking to certain believers. Some people justify their harsh, cutting, critical words, which hurt and divide believers by saying Paul used such terminology. How would you correct someone who justified harsh, cutting, language by appealing to Paul's example?

13. a. What did you learn in chapter one (Act in the Spirit) that will help you deal with the evils of the uncontrolled tongue?

b. What did you learn in chapter two (Act in Love) that will help you deal with the evils of the uncontrolled tongue?

End your time together by praying the prayer of Psalm 141:3

2. What are some ways we rationalize (justify or excuse) our sinful, slanderous speech against our brothers and sisters in Christ?
 - a. Specifically what does James mean by the words “speak evil against another” (James 4:11)?
 - b. Can you give one example of a type of evil speech you commonly hear Christians engage in?
3.
 - a. What sins or wrong attitudes does Jesus condemn in Matthew 7:1-5?
 - b. Why do these particular sins (Matthew 7:1-5) cause conflict and why are they especially destructive to the local church family?
4. The issue of judging is often difficult to understand.
 - a. What kind of judging do Jesus, Paul, and James condemn as sinful and destructive to the believing community? See Matthew 7:1-5; Romans 14:1-13; 1 Corinthians 4:3-5; James 2:1-9; 4:11-12.
 - b. What kind of judging do Jesus, Paul, and James demand that we practice? See Matthew 7:6; 1 Corinthians 5:11-13; James 3:1; 4:4-10.

5. There are endless secondary issues of lifestyle and traditional religious practices to fight over. According to Romans 14:1-15:7, what are the biblical principles for handling conflict among believers over “disputed matters”? List four or five of the most important principles for handling conflict found in Romans 14:1-15:7.

6. Read Romans 15:5-7 to the entire group. This is a prayer wish of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. It is an important prayer that you could pray for your church.

a. What are Paul’s specific requests in this prayer?

b. Why does he make these requests? You may want to look at Romans 15:7-13 to help you answer this question.

7. Read the following verses on grumbling:

Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. (James 5:9)

We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. (1 Corinthians 10:10)

Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. (1 Peter 4:9)

Grumbling is a symptom of wrong attitudes. What are some of the wrong attitudes that lead to sinful grumbling and complaining?

Pursue Reconciliation

This lesson covers pages 91 to 106 of *If You Bite & Devour One Another*.
Read these pages before doing the lesson.

Begin your session by reading the passages below:

Matthew 5:23-24: *“So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”*

Matthew 18:15: *“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.”*

Galatians 4:16: *“Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?”*

Answer the following questions:

1. As a group, read Matthew 5:23-24.
 - a. Explain what would be so shocking about Jesus’ illustration to a first-century Jew.

 - b. Rewrite Jesus’ illustration from Matthew 5:23-24 by exchanging first-century, Jewish practices of worship for modern-day, Christian church practices.

5. In the second step to reconcile a sinning brother or sister (Matthew 18:16-17a), why are witnesses needed and what do they actually do?

6. In the third step to reconcile a sinning brother or sister (Matthew 18:17b-18), the matter is taken to the church body. Why would this be necessary?

7. How does 1 Corinthians 5:11-13 help us to understand the meaning of “let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector” (Matthew 18:17c).

8. Why does Carl need to be expelled from the church?

9. Why is gentleness so necessary when confronting a person about his or her sin? See especially Galatians 6:1; 2 Timothy 2:24-26.

10. a. Read the verses about forgiveness on pages 101-102. What major lessons do you learn from these verses?

b. Why is forgiveness necessary to handling conflict between believers?

11. Why is speaking the truth and avoiding any kind of deceptive talk required of a Christian? For help read Psalms 51:6; Ephesians 4:15, 25; Colossians 3:9; Revelations 22:15.

12. a. What does the author mean by the statement, “many of Christ’s teachings... are counterintuitive and countercultural”? (Page 104)

b. What is “countercultural” about Christ’s teachings in Matthew 5 and 18?

13. a. Define the term *courage*. Use a dictionary to help you.

b. Why does Matthew 18 particularly require the virtue of courage?

Pursue Peace

This lesson covers pages 107 to 119 of *If You Bite & Devour One Another*.
Read these pages before doing the lesson.

Begin your session by reading the passages below:

Matthew 5:9: *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”*

Romans 14:17-19: *“For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.”*

Ephesians 4:2-6: *“With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”*

Answer the following questions:

1. On page 108, there are two different quotations commenting on Matthew 5:9, one by David Turner and the other by Leon Morris. What vitally important truth do you learn from these two commentators about the meaning of Jesus’ statement, “Blessed are the peacemakers” (Matthew 5:9)?
2. According to what you learned in the book about James 3:17-18, what good things (or blessings) does the local church experience as a result of the “wisdom from above” and especially “those who make peace”? (See also Chapter 1, pages 15-18).

6. Read 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 together as a group. Answer the following questions.
 - a. Why was Paul, the church's founder, so emotionally upset by the situation described in 1 Corinthians 6:1-8?

 - b. What reasons does Paul give in verses 6:1-8 for why brother should not take brother to court?

 - c. How could the dispute between the two contending parties in the church at Corinth been justly resolved?

7. Why do we see (at least in some countries) such an explosion of lawsuits among Christian believers today?

8. The book states: "Christian peacemaking is hard, sacrificial work that must be guided by the truths of Scriptures" (page 115). Why is peacemaking "hard, sacrificial work"? List as many reasons as you can think of to answer this question. (For help, see page 118.)

9. What is Paul's charge to all believers in Ephesians 4:3?

10. All that we have learned thus far in this book relates to peacemaking and will equip us to become effective peacemakers.
 - a. What specifically did you learn in Chapter 1 (Act in the Spirit) that prepares you to be an effective peacemaker? (see also page 118 in our present chapter for help in answering this question.)
 - b. What specifically did you learn in Chapter 2 (Act in Love) that prepares you to be an effective peacemaker?
 - c. What specifically did you learn in Chapter 3 (Act in Humility) that prepares you to be an effective peacemaker?

11. Read the quotation by Edward John Carnell on page 115.
 - a. Briefly summarize what Carnell means by this statement.
 - b. Why is it essential that Christian peacemakers know and believe what Carnell states?

Face False Teachers

This lesson covers pages 121 to 135 of *If You Bite & Devour One Another*.
Read these pages before doing the lesson.

Begin your session by reading the passages below:

Galatians 2:5: *“We did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.”*

Jude 3: *“I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.”*

Titus 3:10: *“As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him.”*

1 Timothy 6:3-5: *“If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.”*

Answer the following questions:

1. Discuss why you think the author included a whole chapter in this book on dealing with false teachers of the gospel? Was this really necessary?

2. Read Paul’s farewell speech to the Ephesian elders, particularly focusing on his instructions regarding false teachers (Acts 20:17, 28-31). Explain each of the statements below and discuss with your group the meaning and practical application of each statement.
 - a. “I know”:

b. “Fierce wolves will come in among you”:

c. “From among your own selves”:

d. “Speaking twisted things”:

e. “Be alert”:

3. In both the Old and New Testaments, we see God’s people repeatedly being deceived by false teachers and prophets. Why do you think this happens so often? For helps to answer this question, see 1 Corinthians 15:33-34; 2 Corinthians 11:12-15; Hebrews 5:11-14; Galatians 5:7-12; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3; 2 Timothy 4:2-4; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 4:1-2) (Suggestion: If you are a group leader, you may want to divide the listed verses up among your study group so that each person can study one or two verses more in depth. Each of the listed verses has some good explanations for why believers are led astray to follow false teachers.)

4. Read Acts 15:1-27. What is the chief lesson we learn from this passage that relates directly to our topic of conflict and false teachers? Look at pages 126-127 for additional insight into this passage.

5. Read Galatians 2:1-5. How would you answer a critic who claims that Paul was an intolerant, small-minded bigot for boasting that he would “not yield in submission even for a moment” to other teachers?

10. What do the following verses tell us about the true source of false teaching?

a. Ephesians 6:11-12

b. 1 Timothy 4:1-2

11. What do the following verses tell us about the tactics of false teachers?

a. John 8:44

b. 2 Corinthians 11:13-15

Explanation of Jude 22-23

The next to the last book in the New Testament is the short letter of Jude, our Lord's half-brother. He devotes most of the letter to warning about false teachers and ends it with a call to show mercy to those who are succumbing to the immoral lifestyle of the false teachers. The Lord's people are not to be cold and compassionless:

And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.
(Jude 22-23)

God is merciful and his people are to be merciful. First, Jude says, we are to show mercy to those troubled with "doubt" about the truth of the gospel because of the influence of false teachers. Those who doubt need sympathy and understanding, they need instruction, they need our prayers, and they need our love. They are not to be treated harshly or rejected.

Second, we are to show mercy to those who have fallen into the immoral lifestyle of the false teachers. They need to be strongly warned and sternly rebuked. They need to be told the truth about their perilous condition even if they don't like hearing it. When we care-confront them with their true spiritual state and refute their false theology we are actually "snatching them out of the fire." By doing these things we show mercy to those who are in imminent danger of destruction.

Third, those in the deepest peril also receive our mercy, but with the utmost caution and "with fear." These are the false teachers and their committed disciples. There is some hope for their salvation, so we are to reach out to them with the truth of the gospel, but we must proceed cautiously lest we too become corrupted by their philosophy and lifestyle. These are not people to play mind games with, for they can confuse even the most intelligent. We should abhor their heresies and immoral lifestyles, but pray for their salvation.

After reading Jude's scathing criticism of these apostate false teachers and their heresies (Jude 5-19), we might not expect a call for mercy. Yet, at the end of his letter, he says have mercy on them all. By the power of the Holy Spirit and the truth of the gospel even false teachers can be saved, receive forgiveness for their sins, and be snatched from the fires of hell.

2. Read and meditate carefully on Acts 17:11. What lessons in Christian living and thinking do you learn from this profound passage of Scripture?

3. According to the section entitled “We are Accountable to Biblical Authority” (pages 140-141), why is every believer responsible to study the Scriptures for himself or herself?

4. What are some of the foundational truths of the Christian life upon which all believers can agree? (See pages 142-143 and 146 for answers to this question.)

5. How can we distinguish between foundational truths (which cannot be compromised!) and secondary doctrines, which should not divide our unity? Look at the following scriptures to help you answer this question: Matthew 23:23, 1 Corinthians 15:3-5.

6. Alexander Ross says that “the truth of Christianity cannot be advanced or defended worthily, except in a Christian spirit.” How should believers contend for the faith (as we are called to do in Jude 3) in a Christian spirit?

7. 1 Corinthians 11:19 is considered a difficult verse to interpret. Using commentaries, online Bible helps, or through asking a gifted Bible teacher for help, explain the meaning of 1 Corinthians 11:18-19.

8. a. What does the author mean by the following paragraph on pages 149-150?

Our differences regarding some doctrinal beliefs may be so significant with certain believers that they prevent us from ministering together. But, as brothers and sisters in the Lord, we can still pray together and enjoy each other's company on a personal level. At such times, we put our differences aside and focus on our Christian fellowship together and common beliefs in Christ. As Whitefield said to Wesley, "May all disputing cease, and each of us talk of nothing but Jesus and him crucified."

b. Can you think of an example from your own experiences that illustrates the above point?

9. Explain how the practice of the Golden Rule of love (Matthew 7:12) would help us to handle our doctrinal disagreements more constructively and peacefully.

10. Explain, in detail, how Christlike, Spirit-produced love is "the key to handling our many frustrating controversies and warlike divisions" (page 151).

To read John Newton's wise advise to Christian ministers on handling serious doctrinal conflict, visit the "online resources" section of www.lewisandroth.org.