



Sabbath FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips” (Psalm 141:3, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 14, Unity in the Body of Christ:** “We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation. . . . This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 58, 59.

THE BANANA PRINCIPLE

“A woman once came to me and told me that she had learned to use the ‘banana principle’ with her teenage daughter.

“I wondered, ‘What on earth is the “banana principle”?’

“She explained. She’d noticed that her daughter often clammed up when they got into a discussion. The girl just wouldn’t share what was really on her heart.

“One day the woman got a banana from the kitchen, sat beside her daughter, and asked a question. While the girl answered, the mother very deliberately peeled the banana and took a bite. After she chewed the piece, she asked another question and took another bite. And so it went, through the evening. She found that her daughter opened up about a lot of things.

“What had happened? The mother had made sure she listened after she asked a question. She didn’t rush in with a comment or criticism while her daughter was answering. She just listened and chewed, and chewed, and listened.

“The ‘banana principle’ simply means take time to listen. Ask, and then listen carefully.

“Jesus was a master at asking questions and patiently listening to the answers people gave. Jesus focused on others. Most people focus on themselves. To them, listening is simply a pause. They can hardly wait for the other person to stop talking so they can say what is on their minds. They are more interested in unloading their thoughts than really hearing the answer.

“Here is a vital principle. You can’t learn what is in another individual’s mind if you do all the talking. The essence of Christianity is concern for others. Love allows other people the freedom to share their inmost thoughts and feelings. To love another is to genuinely care. . . .

“You cannot love me if you do not know me. And you cannot know me if you don’t take the time to listen to my heart. So grab a banana. Peel it. Ask a question and take a bite. Then listen with your heart as well as your ears.”—Mark Finley, *Solid Ground* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald®, 2003), p. 174.

Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read Proverbs 18:2-13.
- » Sheilah and her mother seem to always be fighting. Sheilah’s mother will say something, and Sheilah will react by sighing or rolling her eyes. Sometimes Sheilah just ignores her mother. There are times that one or the other of them will respond by saying, “You never listen to me!” or just walk away shaking their heads. Sheilah and her mom are frustrated. What can each of them do to make things better between them?

Monday BIBLE ANSWERS ON UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

- » Read Psalm 133:1; Ephesians 2:14, 16; Ephesians 4:3.
- » God wants us to get along in our families as well as in the church family. With Jesus in our hearts, it is easier to be loving and kind. He brings us together in unity. He knows how much happier and more peaceful our lives would be if we would get along! In Christ we can put aside our own desires, thoughts, feelings, and opinions and open our hearts to be kind, understanding, and forgiving.
- » What are some ways you can bring peace and understanding into your family situation?

- » Unscramble the words and phrases in the word bank and write them on the lines below the scrambled words. Next, place the corrected words/phrases in the correct blank spaces in the Bible verse from the New King James Version to learn how we can show unity in our homes.

oGd fo escape	gnireffusgnlo	rehtona eon htwi gnirabe	evlo	lufknaht eb
ssendnki	rehtona eon gnivigrfo	seicrme red- nte	strahe royu ni elru	ytilimhu

“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on _____, _____, _____, meekness, _____; _____, and _____, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on _____, which is the bond of perfection. And let the _____, to which also you were called in one body; and _____” (Colossians 3:12-15).



Tuesday
REFLECTING

- » Read James 1:19.
- » Have you noticed that we are devoting two lessons to listening? Wonder why?
- » Think about this: “We were given two ears but only one mouth. God knew that listening was twice as hard as talking.” Not only is listening difficult, but listening well is even more difficult—maybe one of the most difficult things we will ever do. But it is also one of the most important things we can do as we mature and grow.
- » The same skills we use in the real world, we carry over into the spiritual world in our walk with God. We need to learn to set aside distractions and preconceived ideas and let God speak to us through the Bible, good books and music (and this Bible study guide), and godly people. Those same skills will be needed when we attempt to tell others about God. First we will need to listen to what they think. Then we can frame what we say to meet their needs.
- » The skill of listening well affects everyone for eternity.

Thursday
CONNECTING

- » Read Proverbs 12:12-23.
- » Review the memory text.
- » Ever wonder why every conversation with your parents or siblings seems to turn into an argument? It could be because you’re too serious! Play a game with yourself called “what they really meant to say.” Recall conversations that have gone bad over the past few days and figure out how you could have responded to make the situation better. Think about what the other person is really trying to say through not only their words but also their tone of voice and facial expressions. Here’s how you play.
- » **Example 1:** Your sister (you share a room) says to you before going to bed: “You’re such a mess. You always throw your clothes on the floor and never pick them up. No one will ever want to room with you.” **Playing the game, you would say:** What she really meant to say was: “When you throw your clothes on the floor after you come home from school and don’t pick them up, I feel frustrated and like I’m the only one who wants to keep the room neat. When my friends come over, I feel embarrassed by how our room looks.”
- » **Example 2:** Your brother says to you: “You never pay any attention to me. You’re always doing things with your friends.” **Playing the game, you would say:** What he really meant to say was: “When you play with your friends, I feel left out. I feel as if you don’t like spending time with me anymore.”

Friday
APPLYING

- » Read Proverbs 10:19.
- » Refer back to Thursday’s lesson to refresh your memory about playing “what they really meant to say.”
- » Keep track of your attempts to listen “between the lines” and hear what your friends and/or family are really saying to you:

What _____ said: _____

What _____ really meant to say was: _____

Wednesday
BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Please read each text and fill in the blanks. Texts are from the New International Version of the Bible. You can go to www.BibleGateway.com if you don’t have an NIV Bible.
- 1. “My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be _____ to _____, _____ to _____ and _____ to become _____” (James 1:19).
- 2. “Sin is _____ ended by _____ words, but the _____ their _____” (Proverbs 10:19).
- 3. “Set a _____ over my _____, Lord; keep _____ over the door of my _____” (Psalm 141:3).
- 4. “Evildoers are _____ by their _____ talk, and so the _____ escape _____. From the _____ of their _____ people are filled with _____ things. . . . _____ show their annoyance at once, but the _____ overlook an _____ The _____ of the reckless pierce like _____, but the _____ of the wise brings _____. . . . The prudent keep their _____ to themselves, but a fool’s _____ blurts out folly” (Proverbs 12:13, 14, 16, 18, 23).

What _____ said: _____

What _____ really meant to say was: _____

- » Now record how listening this way has affected your relationship with someone.

What _____ said: _____

What _____ really meant to say was: _____

What I said to _____:

How _____ reacted: _____

