

# INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDIES

## **How to make the most of these studies**

While your Bible might come complete with a topical index, this certainly wasn't part of the original. In fact the Bible was written by many different human authors over many hundreds of years. Yet because God is the ultimate author, the Bible makes sense as a whole and has much to say about a vast range of topics. This Bible study is designed to help you examine one of these topics: guidance.

Perhaps the best way to study this topic would be to read the Bible cover to cover and make your own topical index! Having discovered all the parts of the Bible which talk about this topic you could then put all the pieces of the jigsaw together and summarize what the Bible as a whole says about guidance. However, most of us would benefit from a bit more guidance on guidance, and this is where this Bible study and the accompanying video/DVD can help.

This workbook will give you the road map for each study, including Bible passages to investigate and questions to think through. At various points you will be prompted to play a section of the accompanying video, where the Bible's teaching on guidance will be summarized and explained. Between your own investigation and discussion, and the teaching material presented on the video, we trust you will gain greater insight into this topic—seeing for yourself what the Bible has to say.

## The format

Each study has up to four different types of material, each having its own symbol.



**For starters:** Questions to break the ice and get you thinking.



**Investigate:** Questions to help you investigate key parts of the Bible.



**Look and listen:** Video segments which summarize the Bible's teaching on a particular topic, integrating the Bible passages you have read and prompting you to think through the implications for yourself. It is a good idea to make notes during the video in the spaces provided in this workbook.



**Think it through:** Questions to help you think through the implications of your discoveries and write down your own thoughts and reactions.

## Suggestions for individual study

Before you begin, pray that God would open your eyes to what he is saying in his word and give you the spiritual strength to do something about it. You may be spurred to pray again at the end of the study.

Work through the study, following the directions as you go. Write in the spaces provided.

Resist the temptation to skip over the **Think it through** sections. It is important to think about what is said in the video presentations (rather than just accepting them as true) and to ponder the implications for your life. Writing these things down is a very valuable way to get your thoughts working.

Take what opportunities you can to talk to others about what you've learnt.

## Suggestions for group study

Much of the above applies to group study as well. The studies are suitable for structured Bible study or home groups, as well as for more informal pairs and threesomes. Each study is designed to take just under an hour to complete, although you may want to allow extra time if you want to discuss the material in more detail.

Everyone will get more out of the studies if each member of the group has done some preparation *beforehand*. In particular, people should work through the **For starters** and **Investigate** sections, making notes in the space provided. If people have worked through these sections then there should be plenty of time to watch the video material and discuss the **Think it through** questions.

*Spend most of the group time discussing the **Investigate** and **Think it through** sections.* If people have done some homework then you should be able to focus on what the passages mean, rather than on finding and reading them.

The role of the group leader is to direct the course of the discussion and to try to draw the threads together at the end. This will mean a little extra preparation—watching all the video sections for each study, working out which questions are worth concentrating on, and being sure of the main thrust of the study. Leaders will also probably want to work out approximately how long they want to spend on each part. See Appendix 1 for suggested timings for each study.

Check before the study commences that the video is cued to the right starting point, or that the DVD is properly loaded. Make sure that everyone can see and hear the video presentations.

We haven't included an 'answers guide' to the questions in the studies. This is deliberate, for we want to give you a guided tour, not a lecture. However, there is more than enough information on the accompanying video to set you on the right path. The rest is up to you.

If you would like to do some further investigation into guidance, we highly recommend reading *Guidance and the Voice of God* (see p. 57 for more details). It is also the ideal way for group leaders to do some extra preparation, since it provides further information and additional examples and case studies.