**2. Associative Bible Study**

*Associative Bible study* uses word pictures to connect familiar objects and concepts with spiritual ideas. Jesus used this approach when He taught in parables. Through association, the Bible text is connected to the reader’s experiences, feelings, and knowledge. In fact, most of what we learn is understood in the context of our previous knowledge and experience. A gardener or farmer will easily understand the parable of the vine and branches (John 15:1-8). Parents will sympathize with Jacob’s dilemma as he considers the (assumed) loss of his son, Joseph (Genesis 37:32-35). Those familiar with yeast will understand the spiritual meaning associated with the effect of leaven (Matthew 13:33). In Romans 12:2 Paul speaks of spiritual change as a type of transformation. When we note that Paul uses the Greek word that means *metamorphosis*, we see the image of a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. In the same way, God is able to transform sinful people into a “new creation” that seeks to do His will.

*Associative Bible study* creates windows to better understanding, helping us make connections between scripture and our own lives. Just as the rain refreshes the earth, God’s Word gives us new spiritual life. Each time a baby is born, we can be reminded that the “new birth” through baptism gives believers a new beginning with God. With practice, we will experience spiritual lessons in nature, work, relationships, and many other aspects of our daily existence that were once “ordinary.”

**Note:** *Associative Bible study* can be combined with other Bible study methods to make the text more meaningful and personal. When we allow our imagination to place us in the scene of the Bible text, the scripture becomes a living part of our lives and draws us closer to God.

4

Date: \_\_\_ Bible Text: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Bible Study Method(s): Inductive ( 1 or 2 ) / Associative / Devotional

Step I: What does this text mean?

Step II: What does this text mean to me?

Step III. How can I apply this text to my life?

29