

DISCIPLESHIP COURSE

River of Life Missionary Church

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking the time to study and learn more about walking with Jesus. This course is not rooted in opinions of man or doctrines of denominations. I can give you my background in ministry as well as my schooling, but that is not necessary. The Word is our focus! I have taken the time to study God's Word so that each topic can be presented to you based on what it says coming from the Scripture ALONE! There are many Discipleship Courses and I could have chosen one of those but decided to create this one for the sole purpose of being able to customize a course adding the necessary tools needed for the believer.

This will be a 9 week session that will take you from fundamental Christianity to Makers of Disciples of the word. Each lesson is meant for you to analyze your walk before analyzing someone else's life. Each thought and point will be validated by SCRIPTURE ONLY. None of the points will be theory or ideas that cannot be confirmed through SCRIPTURE. This has been done to prevent False Teaching and Misguided Discipleship. The lessons are not written to infer that you do not know salvation, but rather to help you teach someone else, what is inside of you.

Thank you for your time!

Roscoe D. Hoffman
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Prior to getting into the session, lets answer a few questions.

1. How did you get saved?
2. What has been the most difficult thing to understand?
3. HOMEWORK: How can you use your testimony to win someone?

PART 1 – THE BEGINNING

A. Sin & Salvation

The most fundamental question in Christianity is the question of **SALVATION**. You cannot answer the question without identifying the most fundamental problem in human history – **SIN**. **Salvation** can be defined as “*the process of turning away from the old life in order to embrace God’s call to surrender*”. **Sin** can be defined as “*the action(s) that violate God’s instruction and order*”. The story of the introduction of **SIN** takes us to Genesis 3 when 2 perfect individuals fell at the hands of a smarter, craftier, and devious creature. We must **FIRST** go back to the instruction given in Genesis 1:29

“And God said, Behold, I have given you EVERY HERB bearing seed, which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.”

And Genesis 2:16-17

“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of EVERY TREE of the garden you may freely eat: EXCEPT of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

This was the first mention of choice. God did not force man to be obedient. Instead, He gave him **FREE CHOICE**. One side of the choice gave life. The other side gave death. We see this when we read the first part to Romans 6:23

“For the wages of sin is DEATH...”

Only looking at one point in the story will cause you to think that God was not fair. You have to see the whole story and understand that God gave Adam and Eve **EVERYTHING** except one thing. That one thing was not given to them for their protection. Sin required that they leave God’s protection and become curious enough to examine the reason behind God’s instruction. Sin indirectly requests God’s validation. God does not have to validate Himself. **YET**, He still validated Himself in John 3:16

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son; that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have **EVERLASTING LIFE**.”*

GOD VALIDATED THAT HE STILL LOVED MAN. Sin teaches that God no longer loves, but Scripture teaches us that God still loved man. There were times when God was “**DONE**” with man and the constant desire to strive for greater sin and greater separation, but He kept forgiving. Keep in mind, there were times when God said “**ENOUGH**” – (See Genesis 6, Genesis 19, Numbers 16) – but He kept giving man a second chance to receive the gift in John 3:16 and the 2nd part of Romans 6:23

“For the wages of sin is DEATH, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

QUESTIONS:

1. How does the story of sin relate to your life?

a. _____

2. Since Adam and Eve caused the problem, why did not God just erase them and start again?

a. _____

3. Why is just being good not good enough?

a. _____

4. What is the gift that God gave man?

a. _____

5. Can you summarize the Sin & Salvation Story?

a. _____

PART 1 – THE BEGINNING (cont.)

B. God Alone?

Last session ended with Romans 6:23

“For the wages of sin is DEATH, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

This is an important statement that has to be addressed during your walk. The salvation question is a question that you will find people asking you because they want you to validate your decision. Why choose Jesus? Why not someone else? Buddha, Muhammad, Confucius, or No One? To answer this question we have to start in Exodus 20:2-3 (Ten Commandments)

*“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
“You shall have no other gods before Me.*

Verse 2 is a notice that when all others were not able to save Israel, God stepped in and saved the day. Going further in verse 5 God makes another statement that He is

“... a Jealous God...”

He saved us when others could not. Therefore, He does not want anyone as a second god or a backup god. He wants to stand alone in our hearts as Ruler and Savior. Throughout scripture you will find God saying He is God alone. Isaiah says...

Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me,

Why choose Him? Because when others failed, God stepped up to the plate and knocked it out the park for the V.I.C.T.O.R.Y. There is none like Him! This is when you have to decipher between all the ones calling themselves god. There is only one who can save. But how does Jesus come into the picture if God is the Savior? The answer is because Jesus Is God! This is a lengthy argument that we will explain as briefly as possible. In John 1:1-4, the writer says

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² He was in the beginning with God.

³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

The Word here is Jesus. He is placed in the beginning before anything was created and it says that He created all things. Genesis 1:1 tells us that God created the heavens and the earth. You must combine these 2 passages to see that Jesus is God. This causes us to ask the question about the Trinity (3 persons = 1 God). Is Jesus part of the Trinity or is that just false doctrine? You must look at it like a human body and how we are as a person. 3 persons... 1 GOD!

God the Father = THE HEAD

Jesus = THE BODY

Holy Spirit = THE SPIRIT

QUESTIONS:

1. How would you explain to someone that God is God ALONE?

a. _____

2. Islam teaches that God has no Son, nor does He have a mother, yet the Bible states otherwise. Explain?

a. _____

3. How is Jesus also God?

a. _____

4. Can you explain the Trinity and why it does not mean 3 separate Gods?

a. _____

5. What have you learned in this lesson?

a. _____

PT. 2 – WATER BAPTISM

Scripture Text: Matt. 3:8; 28:18-19; Acts 2:38

This is a controversial topic within the church and is also the same reason I have separated it from the first topic – **Salvation & Sin**. As it stands there are 2 standard schools of argument.

- Salvation and Water Baptism are 2 separate occurrences – latter is dependent on the first.
- Salvation and Water Baptism occur at the same time. Neither can be separated.

We have already established **Salvation** as “*the process of turning away from the old life in order to embrace God’s call to surrender*”. Where does baptism play a role in this? We must go to the first recording of baptism – Matthew 3. John the Baptist is baptizing those coming to him. He makes this statement in Vs 8 – Bear fruits worthy of repentance. This gives a basis for baptism.

Water BAPTISM is the outward display of the washing that occurred on the inside.

In other words, water baptism shows everyone that you have made the decision to turn from your old ways and follow Jesus. This is done by immersion/ submersion under water. Sprinkling, spraying, putting water in the sign of the cross on someone’s forehead is not water baptism. Submission – especially of the head – is essential so that you can symbolize the changing of the “**Old Way of Thinking**” into the “**New Way of Thinking**”. It symbolizes that you have been washed **clean**. It has been long debated that baptism is needed for salvation or in order to bring the Holy Spirit into your life. Both are not true.

Matthew 28:18-19 – Jesus says go make disciples... This means to make someone like Jesus. Water baptism was not needed for the thief on the cross (Luke 23:43). Repentance is needed – denouncing your old way.

Acts 2:38 – Repent and be baptized in Jesus’ name for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This verse is misinterpreted because some people read it as if you are baptized in Jesus’ name you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 10:44-45 shows that the house of Cornelius (uncircumcised people) received the gift before being baptized. The necessity of being baptized in order to show that you are **really** saved is a dangerous way to interpret scripture and apply church doctrine.

Water baptism is **IMPORTANT** in the life of the believer, yet it is not the spiritual deal breaker. If someone has not been baptized and they got saved 1 week or 1 month before dying, it does **not** mean they were not saved. At the same time, water baptism is important and should be an event in the life of every believer. The most important part of salvation is repentance and acceptance. I come to Jesus and repent from my old ways and accept Him to be the remodeler of my ways.

Please understand that Water Baptism **TELLS** everyone I have made a decision, but Salvation **SHOWS** everyone I have made a decision. You can tell people all you want, but if you don’t show them it is **worthless**.

QUESTIONS:

1. How would you explain to someone what water baptism is?

2. What if I have not been water baptized and saved for 3 years? Is this a problem? Why or why not?

3. Is there a difference in the water baptism by Jesus or Father, Son, Holy Ghost? Explain.

4. If Jesus was perfect, then why did He need to get baptized?

PT. B – LIFE

Scripture: Romans 8:2

Life in Christ can sometimes conflict with Life in... well... Life. When you look at the previous topics of Salvation & Sin, God Alone, Baptism, it makes us try to amalgamate all this in life. But how? First we have to differentiate between Life in Christ and Life in the World.

LIFE IN THE WORLD	LIFE IN CHRIST
See the problems	See the solution
Speak criticisms	Speak the truth
Think negativity	Think heavenly
Get stressed	Get in prayer
Stuck with no hope	Set free
Complain	Worship

When we look at the differences it causes us to see how the left column points to **SIN** while the right column points to **SALVATION**. It is impossible to see the solution if you do not know Jesus. Just as the verse says, “the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set us FREE!”. At the same time, it is difficult to live a “Christ-Life” when you are around so many “Anti-Christ-Lifers”. Their speech is contradictory to what we desire to speak, think and hear as a believer. How do we change it?

1. PRAYER

- a. An active prayer life will ALWAYS produce a positive outlook
- b. Matthew 6:9-13 is an example of prayer.
 - i. Acknowledge God for who He is
 - ii. Make your petition
 - iii. Give Him the Glory
- c. Prayer helps you see what God sees
 - i. When you pray, you focus on God which changes your focus.

2. WORSHIP

- a. Worship is a powerful tool that we MUST use.
- b.

WORSHIP → GOD *is like* **LOVE → SPOUSE**

- c. While we normally know worship to be a part of singing, it goes beyond singing. At the same time, singing is an important part of worship. It expresses – in song – how we feel about the Lord.
- d. Psalm 29:2 tells gives an example of worshipping the Lord for who He is.
- e. Matthew 4:9-10 gives a great example of worship in the context of Normal Life

Prayer and Worship help your life in Christ. Without these two, you will never draw close.

Questions:

1. Can a Christian live the same as the world? Will it affect their walk in Christ?

2. What is the benefit of Prayer in your Life?

3. Is there a chance your prayer would be seen meaningless? Explain.

4. I can't sing well. Does that mean that I do not have to worship?

5. Example: You are going through a rough time. Things are difficult for you. Give an example of how you can worship God in a time like this.

PT. 4 – EVANGELISM

Scripture: Matthew 13:1-9

When evangelism is discussed, the most popular verse is Matthew 28:19 (Go in all nations...). This is simple and straightforward. At the same time, it needs to be discussed about what happens. Before we get there, let's talk about what evangelism is for the believer. Evangelism is "Sharing the Goodness of God with those who do not have a relationship with God." It can be seen as the job of a salesman. A good salesman does not sell you what they have, but rather shares with you what you need. The problem with some people today is they are going around **talking** but not **sharing**.

EVANGELISM IS SHARING!

It's more than just going around talking with your bible. It's about sharing Jesus in a way that grabs attention. When you evangelize, you are trying to feed people with food they need to stay alive. This is why the parable of the sower is a great example. Jesus says that the sower went out to sow a seed. While sowing they encountered 4 different kinds of ground.

1. Wayside

- a. This type of ground is the kind of individual who has no interest in hearing what you have to say. You share with them and then they leave that word right there. It goes nowhere. They have no desire to follow Jesus.

2. Stony Ground

- a. This type of ground is the kind of individual who accepts what you share but the word cannot grow in them. They accept it because it sounds good, but then leave because something else sounds good. They are seekers of the next best thing.

3. Thorny

- a. This type of ground is the kind of individual who accepts what you share. They begin to grow until they become overwhelmed with the thorns (cares) of this world. Due to this, they cannot deal with the things of this world and buckle. This person cannot handle pressure.

4. Good Ground

- a. This type of ground is the ideal candidate for Christianity. This is who we all wish we could encounter. They receive the word happily and begin to seek out more about Jesus. They grow in Christ and begin to share with others. This person is the model example.

So now the question is "which one should we look for when we evangelize?". I used to try and find the right one, but then realized that there is no such as "the right one". All four should receive the same treatment. When you read the passage, you see that the sower just passed the seed along the ground. This brings up hot/cold. A person on **FIRE** for God will want to share about God. A **LUKEWARM** person will not care either way. A **COLD** person will have no interest in sharing about Jesus. If you are going to evangelize, you need to check your temperature for God. Which are you?

Questions:

1. How would you rate your evangelism?

2. What are some tools that can be used for sowing a seed?

3. If I do not evangelize, am I being a bad Christian?

4. What if I do not like talking to people? What do I do?

5. Is there a wrong way to evangelize?

PT. 5 – RULES

Scripture: Matt. 5:17; Exodus 20; Romans 6:15-18

Rules! This is the part of the lesson that is hardest for some people. It talks about freedom yet includes restrictions. In order to understand Jesus, statement you must look at Exodus 20 when God gave Israel the 10 COMMANDMENTS. These were rules established by God to keep man safe and in order. Along with these rules were a bunch of other rules that man had to follow. Why? When Adam and Eve ate of the fruit, they indirectly said that they could obey rules without God's guidance. So God gave them the rules they had to follow.

It's like a teenager who tells the parent "I don't need you to tell me what to do. I can take care of myself." REALLY! Okay. Here is the mortgage, water bill, insurance, Nipsco, food bill, etc. etc. Are they really ready for that? In his/her mind, YES. In reality, ABSOLUTELY NOT!! This was the same issue. God provided rules to show that man/woman was not smart enough to guidance, protect, provide him/herself. Are the rules the problem? No! The rules were made by God, so they are perfect. The problem is with mankind. We are incapable of keeping the rules because the rules require obedience.

SIN REQUIRES DISOBEDIENCE!

Sin tries to keep us from obedience by tapping into our desires and wants. Here we realize the reason Jesus came. Not to expel the rules, but to enable us to have a relationship with God. Think of each rule as a brick. Man took each brick and built a wall between God and man. Jesus came and tore down the wall, but kept each brick and used it to build a bridge to bring man back to God.

When you look at God's rules as a hinderance, that is your flesh trying to build a wall of separation/division. We must look at God's rules as the beginning of a relationship. The Old Testament is the beginning of the story of our relationship with Jesus. It talks about rules that eventually bring us to the One who can keep us when it gets hard to follow the rules. As a child I did not like following the rules. Once I built a relationship with my parents, I realized that the rules were there to bring me closer and to protect me from the things I did not know and could not see.

RULES ARE NOT MEANT TO BE BROKEN. THEY ARE MEANT TO RESTORE.

What Jesus did was provide deliverance from the sin of guilt, sin of shame, sin of fear, due to breaking the law. The law never left, but was complete in Jesus so that we now build a relationship with Him. God's Rules are a good thing. They remind you exactly how much you need Him.

Questions:

1. Which is the hardest rule of God's to follow?

2. Why didn't God just start all over and get rid of Adam and Eve?

3. How are your relationships with those around you?

4. Explain how Jesus fulfilled the law?

5. How can your relationship with God grow? What needs to change?

PT. 6 – FIGHTING BATTLES

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 10:3-4

Last time we spoke about rules and having a relationship. God gave rules to re-establish a relationship with us after sin tried to pull us away from Him. Will sin just give up when you surrender your life to Jesus? 100% NO! When you surrender your life to Jesus that is when the battle begins. Satan wants us to think that the problem we experience is purely natural. This is far from the truth because the natural problems in this life occur as a result of hidden spiritual battles. Adolf Hitler – HATRED, DIVISION. US Civil War – HATRED, SEPARATION. Communism – CONTROL. Democracy – FALSE UNITY.

Let us look at **THE FAB FIVE** that you MUST know.

1. **Know your ENEMY**

- a. This is one of the keys in fighting battles. If I think my enemy is someone in the flesh, then I will struggle in fighting this battle.
- b. 2 Corin. 10:3 tells us that our battle is not physical but spiritual.

2. **Know your ALLY**

- a. The enemy fights the church in this area. As long as the church can stay divided, we will never unite.
- b. Mark 3:35 tells us that your ally is the one with who you bond with spiritually. This is why you have spiritual mothers and fathers in churches. For the purpose of building.

3. **Know your STANCE**

- a. Look at the compromise of the world. Sometimes well you know it is right, stop fighting with someone who refuses to acknowledge THE TRUTH.
- b. Matt. 6:5 says that Prayer is actually a position before it is a job. If you position yourself incorrectly, you will pray incorrectly.

4. **Know your JOB**

- a. My job is really not to defend the gospel. The Gospel will defend itself. My job is to live according to the Gospel.
- b. Ephesians 6:10-18 says that in order to do your job, you **MUST** be dressed appropriately!
 - i. Belt of Truth so you don't believe the lies. Breastplate of Righteousness so your heart is protected. Shoes to help you run this race. Shield of Faith to protect yourself against a surprise attack. Helmet of Salvation for your mind. Sword of the Spirit to know God's Word

5. **Know your GOD**

- a. This is essential and will increase with spiritual growth. To know is knowledge and anything that fights God's knowledge must be "cast down" (removed and evicted)
- b. 1 Samuel 5:1-3 The battle is knowing GOD STANDS ALONE. He is not a co-anything. He is

GOD ALONE!!

Questions:

1. What is a spiritual battle you are facing right now?

2. How can prayer strengthen your spiritual battle?

3. Can a position in prayer be offensive to some?

4. How can you avoid seeing someone as an enemy when they say you are their enemy?

5. Is it wrong if you are not experiencing any battles?

PT. 7 – HOLY SPIRIT

Scripture: Acts 1:8

Last week we talked about Fighting Battles. These battles are supernatural and require mighty weapons of defense and offense. Where do we get these weapons of war? Who gives it to us?

THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Who is the Holy Spirit, What is His role, What does He offer

The first point we must address is **WHO** the Holy Spirit is. John 14:18, 26 identifies the Holy Spirit as the Comforter. This is the gift that we receive when we become saved. Yes, we get the gift of salvation and the gift of eternal life. In addition, we receive the Holy Spirit. He is the 3rd person in the Godhead (Trinity). This means the Holy Spirit cannot be called “IT” unless you are wanting to call God “IT”. It is seen as disrespect to God if you call the Holy Spirit “IT”.

As part of the Trinity, His **ROLE** is to comfort you (vs.26), teach you all things and remind you all things that were taught (vs. 26). Does this mean you do not need anyone to teach you? 1 John 2:27 says this, but it implies that no one needs to teach you how to live right, how to act right, how to talk right. The Holy Spirit who lives inside you is the same one same one who anoints you.

In this, He **OFFERS** gifts to each person. The Gift is different from the gifts and must be identified as different. The Gift is the Holy Spirit. The gifts are manifestations of the Holy Spirit according to whomever and whenever He decides (1 Corinthians 12:7-11). The gifts include:

- Word of Wisdom, Word of Knowledge, Faith, Gifts of Healing, Working of Miracles, Prophecy, Discerning of Spirits, Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues

These gifts are given by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of God being seen, God being glorified, the church being strengthened, and people being saved. This is important to understand because the moment the gifts are put at a higher level than the Gift, then you can miss out on growing in your gift. Each gift is needed for us to see more of Christ in our lives and more of Christ in someone else’s lives. Look at it this way... Being Filled vs. The In-Filling. Being Filled happens when you become saved. The In-Filling is what you receive from the Holy Spirit afterwards. **Both are needed. Both are necessary. Both are life changing.** Strive that you may receive **BOTH!**

Questions:

1. Who is the Holy Spirit?

2. How do you receive the Holy Spirit?

3. What gift do you think applies to you? Why?

4. Can you be filled but never receive an infilling? Explain?

5. What have you taken from this?

PT. 8 – THE END TIMES

Scripture Text: Matthew 24; 1 Thessalonians 4; Book of Revelation

The End Is Near! This has been a statement and conversation for centuries. When the 1st World War was taking place, everyone was wondering if it was the end times. When Adolf Hitler rose to power and the 2nd World War took place, everyone was certain it was the end times. When Yasser Arafat rose to fame in Palestine and was working with Israel to bring peace to the Middle East, people began to wonder if it was the end times. The Bible talks about eschatology (end time teaching) throughout various scriptures. We will look at 3 main passages in Matthew 24, 1 Thessalonians 4, and The Book of Revelation to find our understanding of the events that will unfold at the end of the age. The most important part of End Times Teaching comes from the words of Jesus,

“Take heed that no man deceives you (leads you astray)!”

While the events that unfold are important, the most important information is “Do not be deceived”. Knowing what is going to happen and the order that it will take place is helpful. At the same time, never let the order of the events overshadow your walk with Jesus.

**IT IS BETTER TO LIVE RIGHT,
THAN TO KNOW ALL THE RIGHT THINGS!**

Knowing the answers does not make you smarter or better than others. As a matter of fact, it can be more dangerous for some because they think they can answer all the questions. Don't strive to answer. Strive to show the answer. Let's look at the events.

- Collapse of World's Economy (Rev. 6:6)
- Wars & Mass Murders/ Death (Matt. 24:6-8; Rev. 6:7-8)
- Rise & Reveal of the Anti-Christ (Rev. 13:1-15)
- Mark Of The Beast (Rev. 13:16-18)
- Great Tribulation (Satan's Wrath) (Matt. 24:9-13)
- RAPTURE (Matt. 24:29-31; 2 Thess. 2:3; 1 Thess. 4:16-17)
- Judgment Day (2 Corin. 5:10)
- Great Tribulation (God's Wrath) (1 Thess. 5:9; Rev. 15, 16)
- Battle Of Armageddon (Rev. 19:11-21)
- Millennium Reign (Rev. 20:1-5)
- Satan's Destruction (Rev. 20:7-10)
- Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15)

Questions:

1. What is your understanding of End Times?

2. If God is loving and forgiving, will He forgive me if I take the Mark?

3. What if the rapture happens, will people still have an opportunity to get saved?

4. You are witnessing to someone who says they will just wait until the Mark is revealed before they get right. Why is this a bad idea?

5. What have you taken from this?
