



Curriculum for Coaches Discipleship Training

INTRODUCTION: Every successful coach knows that winning teams are built on a solid foundation of “basics” in their sport. In wrestling every good wrestler knows that success starts with sound basics. Wrestling on the feet requires a solid stance, with head up; butt down; (changing levels by bending the knees, not bending at the hips); and elbows in (maintaining inside control with the hands). These basic principles are critical to victory at every level of the sport, from beginners to the Olympics.

The same is true in our Christian life. If you are called as a child of God, you are called to be “a warrior for Christ”. Just as athletes must be well-trained and well-conditioned for battle, so must the Christian be well-trained in their faith. For every warrior will face battle, and every true Christian is a warrior for Christ. Psalms 144 says, “Blessed be the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for war and my fingers for battle.” Eph. 6: 10 – 12 says, “Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the ... spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly (spiritual) realms.” Listen, we are in spiritual battle, whether we like it or not! What kind of warrior do you want to be? A well-trained and well-conditioned gladiator, who is prepared for battle and ready to give your all in every situation God calls you? Or do you want to be a weak soldier who crumbles under the pressures of our evil world? And how will you lead the ones entrusted to your care by the Lord?

It is an old saying, “There are two kinds of pain in this world; the pain of preparation, or the pain of regret.” This two year study is a training time for those coaches who want to be well-trained and well-conditioned for the spiritual battle; for those who want to be well-prepared to lead those under their influence into victory. It will require discipline, faithfulness, and commitment. However, the end result is that you (as a coach) will be more effectively equipped to engage your loved one, your athletes, and all in your sphere of influence with the Truth of God’s Word, in order that they will themselves will be able to engage, equip, and empower others to take the message of God’s Word to their world.

As every athlete must be trained in the basics of their sport, every follower of Christ must know, understand, and practice certain foundational truths (Biblical principles) to live a victorious and effective Christian life. Coach, the following lessons, are designed to help you build a solid Biblical foundation in your life, so that you may become a strong and effective warrior for Christ, and a leader for Him in every sphere of influence, from your home, to your team, to your community. This not another “leadership training program”, nor is it a manual on “how to build a winning program”. In short, this is a “discipleship training program” is to ground you in your Biblical faith. And the program is designed for personal accountability in the busy life of a coach. This study will be a tool to help you grow in your relationship with Christ and become increasingly more victorious in loving your Lord, leading your family, coaching your team, and influencing your community for Jesus Christ.

FIRST MONTH

Who was Jesus Christ, and what makes Him unique among all men?

Week One: The claims Christ made about Himself, and the implications of those claims. (Who did Jesus say He was, and why is it important?)

- I. Jesus made very specific and direct claims concerning His own Deity (that He was “God in the flesh”).
 - a. Read John 8: 51 – 59. In this passage Jesus was speaking to some Jews who were starting to believe in Him. Some Jewish religious leaders, (Pharisees) came along to challenge Him.
 - i. During Jesus’s discussion with these men, He makes one very specific claim about Himself. What did He say, and what did it mean to the Jews? (see John 8: 56 – 58)
 - ii. How did His enemies respond to the claim Christ made? (see John 8: 59).
 - b. Read John 14: 1 - 9. Who was Jesus talking to in this passage?
 - i. What did Jesus say about Himself in John 14: 6 – 7? Was He leaving the door open for many ways to a relationship with God?
 - ii. What was Jesus’ response to Philip’s question in John 14: 8 – 9?
 - iii. What did Jesus mean by His two bold statements in verses 7 and 9?
 - c. Read Matthew 28: 18 - 20. In Jesus’s last words to His “Disciples”, He gives them a command, to “go and make disciples of all nations”. How did Jesus start off this command? What was the basis of Christ’s command? (Note: a “disciple” was / is a close follower, who follows the teaching of a leader and submits their life to those teachings.)
- II. Conclusion: Jesus’ distinct claims to being “God” in the flesh really eliminates the popular theory in our society today that He was a great moral teacher, or a wonderful religious leader who went around speaking profound truth. Actually, the claims that Christ made about Himself can only draw the intellectually honest person to one of three conclusions: Christ was either a very slick liar, (who fooled a lot of people); or someone who was completely out of touch with reality; or He was who He said He was, the Lord of the Universe. *Well known author C.S. Lewis (who himself set out to disprove Christianity, and after seeing the historical evidence of the life, death, & resurrection of Christ, gave his heart to Jesus Christ) puts it this way: “I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on the level of a man who thinks he a poached egg, or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about His being a*

great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.” (A Ready Defense; Josh McDowell. p. 241-242). Which of these three choices seems the most logical to you? Who do you say that Christ is; Lord, Liar, or Lunatic?

III. APPLICATION: If Jesus Christ is actually who He said He is, then how does that impact my personal faith? How does this Truth impact the way I see my world? How does this impact the way I relate to & treat other people?

IV. MEMORY VERSES: John 14: 6; John 14: 9.

Week Two: What did the people of Jesus' time say about Him?

- I. As Jesus lived and ministered among the people of Israel, He invoked some very dramatic responses. His encounters with people inspired, healed, and changed people's lives. Let's look a few of these examples and what people said about Jesus.
 - a. **Read John 1: 1 – 3; 14.** When the Apostle John wrote his Gospel letter, (approx. 80 years after Christ's birth), he wrote the "epistle" (letter) as an eyewitness to the life and events of Christ's life. John was a close friend of Jesus, and one of His Disciples.
 - i. How does John identify Jesus in this passage (John 1: 1 – 3; 14)?
 - ii. What did John say about Jesus in John 1: 1?
 - iii. What does John say about Jesus in relation to the "time & space" continuum?
 - iv. What does John say about Jesus' role in the Creation itself?
 - v. What does John 1: 14 say about the Creator?
 - vi. Why do you think he did not go see Jesus during the daytime hours?
 - b. **Read John 3: 1 – 14.** In this passage Jesus was confronted by a Pharisee named Nicodemus, who had a heart to seek God.
 - i. What was Nicodemus's rationale for going to talking to Jesus in private, at night?
 - ii. Why do you think he did not go see Jesus during the daytime hours?
 - iii. What was it about Jesus that drew Nicodemus to Him seek out?
 - iv. What spiritual reality did Jesus confront Nicodemus with?
 - v. What does it mean to be "born again"?
 - vi. Upon what authority did Jesus explain the spiritual realm to Nicodemus?
 - vii. Where did Jesus tell Nicodemus He had come from?
 - viii. What do you think Jesus was predicting in John 8:14?
 - c. **Read John 20: 19 - 29.**
 - i. After Christ was resurrected from the dead, and He revealed Himself to the disciples (still in hiding), who was the missing disciple?
 - ii. What did the Thomas say when he first heard about Jesus being risen from the dead?
 - iii. What did Thomas say when Christ revealed Himself to him? (John 20: 28)
 - iv. How did Thomas identify Jesus at that point in the conversation? (And remember this was when all the disciples were still in hiding for fear of their own lives.)
- II. **Conclusion:** In the few passages identified in this lesson, how did people respond to the words, the life, and miraculous resurrection of Christ? What drew these people to Christ? What draws you to Christ?
- III. **APPLICATION:** People from all walks of life came to see and listen to Christ. Many of them came to the same conclusion, that Jesus Christ was God in the flesh. They did not all believe at first, but after seeing & hearing the facts, they came to the same conclusion: Jesus was God the Creator. Are you willing to take an intellectually honest look at the facts concerning Christ's life, death, and resurrection?
- IV. **MEMORY VERSES:** John 1: 1 – 3; 14.

Week Three: The Resurrection of Christ – Was it a hoax, or is it history?

- I. Read Matt. 27: 33 – 54; 57 – 60; 28: 1 – 7. What events do these passages describe in the life of Christ?
 - a. See Matt. 27: 33 – 44, and take note of Jesus' first 3 hours upon the Cross. Now read Matt. 27: 45 – 50, which describe Christ's last 3 hours upon the Cross.
 - i. Who were the men that actually tortured Christ and nailed Him to the Cross?
 - ii. What was the attitude of these men toward Christ when they crucified Him?
 - iii. What did the Roman guard say after Christ died upon the Cross (Matt. 28: 54)?
 - b. Read Matt. 27: 57 – 66. Who buried Christ, and what precautions did they take to secure the grave / tomb of Christ?
 - c. See Matt. 28: 1 – 10. What historic event occurred on the third day after the authorities had buried Christ?
 - i. Also see John 20: 19 – 29. Who did Christ appear to in this passage? What were these men, and why were they hiding from the Jewish authorities?
 - ii. Now read 1 Cor. 15: 3 – 8. How many people total encountered the Risen Christ at the time of this writing from the Apostle Paul?
 - iii. See 1 Cor. 15: 12 – 17. Why is the resurrection so important to our Christian faith?
 - d. Three popular theories that nonbelievers utilize to explain away the "empty tomb":
 - i. "The Swoon Theory" – Christ never actually died, but only fainted on the Cross. He was removed from the Cross while still alive. After Christ was buried the coolness of the rock tomb revived Him. He fought through over 100 pounds of burial wrappings, pushed open the two-ton stone rolled across the front of the tomb, and snuck stealthily past the 16 man Roman Guard unit (4 men on duty at a time) who were there to guard the tomb. Two logical arguments against this theory: First, the Roman guards who took Jesus down from the Cross were professional killers, who pierced His side with a spear to confirm Christ's death. When water and blood flowed separately from Christ's side, that did confirm His death to the guards. (In modern medicine, the separation of blood and water is still a clear sign of death.). In addition, even if Christ had not died upon the Cross, after all that torture and the crucifixion, He could never have removed the large stone by Himself and sneak by the Roman guards in His weakened condition.
 - ii. "The Hallucination Theory": Jesus did not really rise from the dead, but His followers all saw a hallucination (or a vision) of Him, because of their disturbed state of mind at that time. The arguments against this theory: It may be remotely possible that two separate people could have a similar hallucination, but for over 500 people (all from different backgrounds and psychological experiences) to have the exact same hallucination is virtually impossible. This theory also fails to explain why the Jewish and Roman authorities did not just produce the body of Christ (if they still had it in the tomb) to squelch this new religious movement among the followers of Christ.

- iii. **The “Stolen Body Theory”:** After Jesus was crucified, dead, and buried, His body was stolen by His disciples. Then they went out and preached a Gospel message they knew was false, at the peril of their own lives. The big problem with this theory is that the disciples all went into hiding to avoid trouble with the authorities. They were scared for their own lives. Yet, an event happened so dramatic and life-changing, that almost all of the disciples followed Christ to a martyr’s death. The only one not martyred for preaching the Gospel of Christ was the Apostle John, who himself was boiled in oil and lived through it. He was then exiled to the island of Patmos, from where he wrote the final book of the Bible, “The Book of Revelation”.
- iv. **“The Wrong Tomb Theory”:** Actually Jesus did not rise from the grave, but it was just that everybody forgot where they laid His body. That would have included His mother and family, His followers, the Jewish religious authorities, the Roman guards assigned to guard the tomb, and even the owner of the tomb (Joseph of Arimathea). They all got confused and went to a wrong tomb. When they could not find the body of Christ, the rumor spread that He had risen from the grave. Seriously, how much sense do this make? It would have been more than monumental incompetence on the part of the Roman authorities who crucified Christ. And this theory assumes the ridiculous notion that even the owner of the tomb forgot where his family burial tomb was.

- II. **Conclusion:** Jesus’ resurrection from the grave proved three things: First, that Christ was God, (just as He said); second, that Christ conquered death by His own power and we have real hope of life after death; and third, that the Christian’s faith is not in vain, but is founded on a solid historical event that no person has ever been able to refute or explain. It takes far more “blind faith” for the skeptics to hold to these theories, than for the Christian who bases his / her faith in the Risen Christ!
- III. **APPLICATION:** Because we know that Christ has conquered death, we know He has the power to change our lives on this earth, and that we have a true hope for “the life to come”.
- IV. **MEMORY VERSES:** 1 Cor. 15: 3 – 4, 14.

Week Four: Jesus Christ's life fulfilled over 60 Old Testament prophecies concerning the "coming Messiah". The Jewish people understood that fulfillment of Messianic prophecy was a confirmation of the true Messiah. In fact, in the Old Testament Hebrew society, the uncompromising standard for any Biblical prophecy was that it must be 100% accurate. So a significant question for substantiating the "diety of Christ" is: "Did Christ's life actually fulfill the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah, or was He nothing more than a hoax"?

- I. **The life of Christ fulfilled over 60 major Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming Messiah (Savior).** *Let's look at a just few of these prophecies & their fulfillment:*
 - a. **THE PROPHECY:** Gen. 3: 15 predicted the coming Messiah would be "born of the seed of a woman", and would "bruise the head" (this phrase indicates a fatal wound) of the serpent (the devil)". **THE FULFILLMENT:** Gal. 4: 4 says, "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law". And In Eph. 2: 1 – 2; 4 – 6 Paul explains that although we were "dead in our sins, in which we walked according to the ... the prince of the power of the air (the devil)", but "God being rich in mercy, ... made us alive together with Christ." Christ's came into the world "to give His life as a ransom for many (Mk. 10:45); "Therefore, is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.
 - b. **THE PROPHECY:** Isaiah 9:7 predicts the Messiah would heir to the throne of King David. **THE FULFILLMENT:** Speaking of Jesus, Luke 1: 32-33 says "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father (from David's lineage) David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever...".
 - c. **THE PROPHECY:** Micah 5: 2 predicts the birth place of the Messiah, would be the town of Bethlehem. **THE FULFILLMENT:** Luke 2: 4,5, 7 shows that Jesus was born in Bethlehem.
 - d. **THE PROPHECY:** Isaiah 7: 14 predicts the Messiah would be born of a virgin. **THE FULFILLMENT:** Luke 1: 26, 27, 30, 31 records that Christ would be born of a virgin.
 - e. **THE PROPHECY:** The time of the Messiah's birth – predicted Daniel 9:25, **FULFILLED** in Luke 2:1.
 - f. **THE PROPHECY:** Hosea 11: 1 predicts the Messiah would come "out of Egypt". **THE FULFILLMENT:** Matt. 2: 14-15 relates how after the wise men / magi had seen the baby Jesus and departed, Joseph was led by God to take his family to Egypt. For God had warned Joseph to escape King Herod's impending murder of all the male children (ages 2 yrs. old and younger) in Bethlehem and the surrounding area. Joseph brought his family back to Israel after Herod died.
 - g. **THE PROPHECY:** The Messiah would be rejected by His own people (the Jews), as noted in Isaiah 53: 3. **THE FULFILLMENT:** John 1: 11; Luke 23: 18
 - h. **THE PROPHECY:** The Messiah would be betrayed by a close friend (Psalm 41: 9). **THE FULFILLMENT:** Luke 22: 47 – 48 shows how Judas betrayed Jesus.
 - i. **THE PROPHECY:** The Messiah would be executed with criminals. **THE FULFILLMENT:** Mark 15: 27 – 28 relates how Christ was crucified with two robbers.

- j. **THE PROPHECY:** The Messiah would be “pierced” during His execution. **THE FULFILLMENT:** John 19: 34 relates how Christ’s side was pierced while on the Cross, (as a confirmation by the Roman guards that He had actually died.).
 - k. **THE PROPHECY:** That the Messiah would conquer death (Psalm 16: 10; Ps. 49: 15). **THE FULFILLMENT:** Christ rose from the grave (Matt. 28: 1 – 10; Mark 16: 6 -7; Luke 24: 1 – 12.)
 - l. **THE PROPHECY:** The purpose of the Messiah’s time on earth would be to suffer and die as the atonement for our sin; predicted in Isaiah 53:2-7,11,12 and **FULFILLED** in Matt. 26-27; Mark 15:1-47; Luke 23; John 18-19.
- II. These are just a few of sixty-one O.T. specific prophecies pertaining to the birth, life, betrayal, trial, torture, death, and resurrection of the Messiah, all of which were fulfilled through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Please note that all of these Old Testament prophecies concerning the life of the Messiah were written hundreds of years before the birth of Christ. These prophecies declared with certainty that the Messiah would be born of a virgin; born in Bethlehem of Judea; that He would be born at the time of the Roman census under the Emperor Caesar Augustus; and that He would be God Almighty Himself, coming to save the world from its sins. God did not have to predict the specific details of His Son’s entrance into the world, how He would die, or His resurrection. However, God gave mankind these supernatural predictions so the world would recognize who Jesus was. And only an all-powerful and sovereign God could have arranged the events of human history in a manner that proved who His Son really was.
- III. Based on principles of sound mathematical probability, the fact that Christ fulfilled sixty-one O.T. prophecies (predictions) is solid evidence that Jesus Christ was God in the flesh.
 - a. Let’s look at a mathematical analysis of the probabilities: According to Dr. Peter Stoner (Professor Emeritus of Mathematics & Astronomy at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, CA), the possibility of one man fulfilling just 8 of the O.T. prophecies concerning the Messiah would be “one in one hundred quadrillion”! The fact that Jesus Christ fulfilled over 60 O.T. prophecies during His life on earth makes the mathematical odds virtually impossible, by any standard of mathematical probability. It shows conclusively that Jesus was truly God in the flesh whose life supernaturally fulfilled the predictions of the coming Messiah. It also proves that the Bible itself is a book of “supernatural origin”.
- IV. **Conclusion:** We are often challenged in our society on our Christian faith, being told we live by a blind faith, without any intellectual foundation. However, it is the skeptics who too often base their belief systems on what is convenient for them, rather than intellectually honest at the facts. When the “skeptics” say that the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy in the life of Christ was merely accidental, it only shows that they do not know what they are talking about. Or, perhaps they are avoiding facts because they don’t want to be challenged with the reality of God Himself, due to their own pride, or a “moral issue” in their life. Whenever a person acknowledges that we have been created by a true, supernatural, holy God, we must also acknowledge that we are accountable to Him.
- V. **APPLICATION:** Ultimately, as Christians we can be fully confident in the intellectual foundation for our Christian “faith”. Of course, we should educate ourselves concerning the historical facts in Scripture, so that we are “always be ready to give an account for the hope that is within us”. (I Peter 3: 15).
- VI. **MEMORY VERSE: 1 Peter 3: 15**