

# discipleship essentials

Essentials for Spiritual Leadership  
Study Guide

## CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

### LESSON 7: JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY

#### INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module titled Christian Doctrine. This series of lessons examines doctrines which are foundational to our faith, with an emphasis on how incorrect doctrine can negatively impact true faith. Doctrine is the set of beliefs that determine how we practise our faith. It is critical that Christians understand correct doctrine about the nature of God and salvation, especially if they are engaged in teaching and discipling. This module examines scriptures related to a number of core doctrines of the Christian Church, and also some of the areas of confusion and error associated with each doctrine.

The Study Guide is intended for an individual to look deeper into a specific lesson on their own. The lessons can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials, such as the video and audio productions found on [www.discipleshipessentials.org](http://www.discipleshipessentials.org).

---

Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

All other content is © 2019 Trans World Radio Canada, and may be used in any way you like as long as you use it with the purpose of reaching the world for Christ and do not charge for the use of the material. See more license details at [www.discipleshipessentials.org/licensing](http://www.discipleshipessentials.org/licensing).



# CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

## LESSON 7: JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY

### WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

This lesson looks at the doctrine that teaches there is only one way to be saved, and that is through Jesus Christ.

### JUST SO YOU KNOW...

Some cultures and communities are more affected by the postmodern ideas that truth is relative, and for Christians to insist that there is only one true religion makes them narrow minded, lacking in compassion or tolerance, or simply arrogant. Some religions would dismiss Christianity as a false religion, a religion that promotes western capitalism, or merely an ideology that is against the state religion. Jesus divides. You will face people who question whether Jesus is the only way to God, or deny it by the way they live their lives. We must not be surprised or confused by that, for we know that there is only one way given to us to be saved, and it is by Jesus. This makes Christianity at odds with all other faiths, religions and worldviews.

## GETTING STARTED

1. The name Jesus often divides people. What did Jesus claim about Himself that requires people to either believe or reject him? Are there other figures in history that produce a strong emotional reaction - either love or hatred? What did they claim or do?

2. Some people falsely believe that at their core, all religions believe the same thing. Have you heard this statement before? Why might people think this? Why is it not true?



# STUDY

❖ **THE EXCLUSIVITY OF CHRISTIANITY:** When we read the accounts of the Gospels, we encounter many statements that Jesus says about Himself which are noteworthy. One of the most shocking to the hearers of His day would have been, *"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die"* (John 11:5-26). After the day of Pentecost, Peter explained to the religious leaders in Jerusalem that Jesus is the only way to salvation. He said, *"This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved"* (Acts 4:11-12).

- Some world religions and faiths allow for many ways to eternal life. Others hold that a very specific set of beliefs and practices are necessary. Christianity does not teach that there are many truths, many ways of salvation or many means to eternal life, rather that there is only one way. God has made His salvation available exclusively through His Son, Jesus Christ.
- God has never tolerated the worship of other gods because there is only one God. All other beings that men worship are idols – false, empty and without power. God punished people for turning away to other gods in order to keep them close to Himself.
- What does God’s Word say about the exclusive claims of Christianity?

Exodus 20:3-6	
Jeremiah 11:12	
Deuteronomy 12:29-31	
Psalms 135:15-18	

- God’s people were always rescued from the penalty of sin on the basis of their faith in what God had revealed. God has now revealed that Jesus, His Son, is the only way of salvation, the truth of God revealed, and the means to eternal life. We can either believe this is true, or reject it as false. This belief is incompatible with the worship of other false gods; therefore, to believe God is to accept that there is only one true faith, one means to salvation, and that is Jesus.



- **The doctrine that teaches that Jesus is the only way can be stated this way: Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Apart from Him there is no forgiveness of sins, and there is no other way by which salvation can be achieved.**

❖ **JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY:** When discussing the exclusive claims of Christianity that Jesus is the only way, we must recognize that this idea did not come from the Church (an organized religious group), but that it came from Jesus Himself.

- **Jesus' Claims About Himself:** During His ministry on earth, Jesus made many strong claims about who He is, where He came from and where He was going. What did He say in John 14:6? Does this leave any room for other ways of salvation?

- **Jesus claimed to have come from heaven** (John 6:38). He did not say He had knowledge of Heaven, or had visited – but rather He had been eternally existent with the Father and lived in Heaven with Him. Other religions are about people ascending to God through what they do (good works, morality). Christianity is about God coming down to us.
- **Jesus claimed to be God** (John 4:25-26, Mark 14:61-64, Matthew 26:57-68). Jesus was accused and crucified for blasphemy, because He had claimed to be God. There is no mistaking what Jesus claimed to be, or the knowledge that He claimed to have. Since God Himself came down with knowledge of how we are to live, His revelation must be trusted above the revelation of mere men.
- **Jesus claimed to have the truth** (John 1:14, 8:45, 18:37). Jesus claims that He speaks the truth. Many of those who opposed Him told lies. Jesus makes a statement that there is truth in this world, it is possible to know truth, and that truth changes how we live. Jesus Christ speaks that truth.
- **Jesus claimed He had authority over all creation** (Matthew 28:18, Matthew 11:27, Matthew 16:27). Jesus claimed that all creation – the earth, mankind, angels – everything was under His authority. His commands are the same as what God revealed in the Law.
- **Jesus claimed He could forgive sins** (Luke 5:24, Matthew 9:2-6). While each of us can forgive sins committed against us, we do not have the right or authority to forgive sins committed against someone else. Jesus claimed He could forgive all sins – even those committed against God. Jesus is telling us that it is through Him only that we can receive forgiveness of sins.
- **Jesus said the way is narrow** (Matthew 7:13-14, John 10:9). Jesus called Himself the door, and that the way to eternal life was narrow and hard to find.



This tells us that not everyone will find salvation, and that there is only one way in.

- Jesus didn't just claim these things, but demonstrated them through His miracles. Can you think of some of the instances where Jesus demonstrated these claims?

- No other religious figure has made the claims that Jesus has! Why must He be all these things in order to be the only way of salvation?

- **Other Claims about Jesus:** The Gospel accounts attest to Jesus' authority and the fact that salvation is through Him alone. The other writers of the New Testament repeat this truth. We must accept the authority of Jesus Christ and what He accomplished through His death and resurrection in order to be forgiven.

- **John the Baptist:** What did he say about Jesus? Read [John 3:31-36](#).

- **The Apostle Peter:** What did he say about Jesus? Read [Acts 4:12](#).

- **The Apostle Paul:** What did he say about Jesus? Read [1 Timothy 2:5](#).

- **Why this Leaves No Room for Another Way:** The story God has told throughout history and revealed through the pages of the Bible excludes multiple ways of being



restored to a right relationship to God and achieving eternal life. Consider these truths:

- o There is *only* One God.
- o God made us in His Image, special over all of creation.
- o Adam sinned against God and entered into slavery to sin.
- o Through the sin of one man, Adam, sin entered the world.
- o Through one man (Abraham), God created one special family.
- o Through this one family, God created one nation (Israel).
- o Through this one nation, God gave the law. Through the prophets, God promised one Saviour who would fulfill the law.
- o God sent Jesus to be that one Saviour to set us free from sin.
- o Through faith in the one sacrifice of that one Saviour, we can be restored to God.
- o There is one worldwide Church, one Holy Spirit given to all Christians, and one true revelation of God (His Word, the Bible).

If we could have escaped sin on our own in any other way, Jesus would not have had to free us. But we were trapped in our sin (slaves), and no one, except Jesus, could pay the price to buy our freedom. To Him all authority has been given. No other religion or spiritual path will solve our sin problem, and no one else can free us.

- ❖ **THE WAY TO GOD:** There are many worldviews that claim to be “ways” to God. Does it not seem very narrow and unfair that God would provide only one way? It is important for us to note that every religion or worldview claims that they, and they alone, hold the truth. There is no escaping the fact that every religion offers one narrow path to God.

The difference in Christianity is that we do not follow a human guide, but God Himself. We do not follow a guide who has or who will die, but rather the One who defeated death and can give us eternal life. We do not follow someone who merely heard from Heaven or visited, but the One who has eternally lived at the right hand of God the Father. Jesus, who called Himself, "The Way", said that no one comes to the Father except through Him ([John 14:6](#)). We must choose one way, one path. It is not possible to walk on two paths at the same time and hope to reach one destination!

- ❖ **ERRORS IN DOCTRINE REGARDING JESUS AS THE ONLY WAY:** Some who call themselves Christians fall into error when they don't fully understand and accept the doctrine of the exclusivity of Christianity. Some of those errors include the belief that:

- **Error #1: All religions are the same:** This falsehood states that all religions basically teach the same thing and, therefore, it doesn't really matter what path you take as long as you try to be a good person. However, it only takes a brief look into the core of what some of the major religions of the world teach to see that they are not compatible. They teach different things about who God is, who Jesus is and how to be saved. If what they teach contradicts one another, it is not possible that all of them are true. If one is true, the others must all be false. One should investigate the claims



of Christianity and its uniqueness among all religions to see that Christianity is the only way.

- **Error #2: Jesus was just a good teacher:** Some people believe that Jesus was merely a teacher or prophet, not God Himself, and that we can follow the teachings of Jesus without following Him as our Lord. People who believe this may respect or read about Jesus along with other moral teachers, but do not wish to submit their life to God’s authority. However, it is impossible to read the teachings of Jesus without coming across His own claims that He is God, that He alone possesses authority over all things and He alone knows the Father and can share that truth with others. For Jesus to make these claims and not actually be God Himself would make Him a liar – and therefore, not a good or respectable teacher. We must not let ourselves believe that Jesus asked us to simply ‘be kind’. He asked us to trust Him as Lord and come to Him alone for forgiveness from sin.
  
- **Error #3: I can follow more than one religion:** This falsehood states that we can follow more than one religious path at the same time. Some people will convert to Christianity but continue to observe their previous religion as part of a cultural practice. The Bible does not forbid us from observing cultural festivities ([1 Corinthians 10:31](#)). But when we place trust in anything else, including ritual, luck or karma, we are denying that Jesus Christ alone is the way, the truth, and the life. This is idolatry and angers God. When we follow multiple religions hoping that one or more of them is true, we deny that Jesus told the truth, and demonstrate our lack of faith in Him alone.
  
- What are some ways that people unintentionally follow more than one religion at a time by the way they live, their daily habits, or what they say?

❖ **CONCLUSION:** Christianity claims that there is only one way for us to escape the punishment for our sin, and be restored to relationship with God, leading to eternal life. This is through our faith in and forgiveness by Jesus Christ. No other means has been given to us. This teaching of the Church is founded in the words of Jesus Himself, the words of all writers of the Bible and the history of His people. God loves us, and desires us to be saved – but there is only one way, one truth and one life.



## SUMMARY

- ❖ Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Apart from Him there is no forgiveness of sins, and there is no other way by which salvation can be achieved.
- ❖ Jesus made exclusive claims about Himself: He was God, came from Heaven, was the truth, had authority over creation, and forgives sins. He also warned that the way to salvation is narrow. Others confirmed Jesus' exclusive claims, teaching that there was no other way to eternal life, there was no other name under heaven given to us for salvation, and there is no other mediator between God and people.
- ❖ The way to God is specific, narrow, and only one path. It is not possible to walk more than one path at a time and hope to reach our destination!

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What convinced you of the truth of Christianity and that Jesus was the only truth?

2. What would you say to someone who thought that Jesus was a good man, a moral teacher, or just a prophet? How do the words of the Bible demonstrate differently?