



Off the Cuff: Part Four - Study Guide

October 7, 2012

By Brent Edwards

It's all about the options! We live in America, the land of the free, and with it comes an abundance of things to choose from. For the most part, we can usually have it our own way! Food, clothes, housing, investments, and the spouse we choose, even what comes equipped in our cars—options have become a way of life. But have you ever wished there were fewer options? Can too many choices sometimes become confusing? What if you could travel any direction on the highway, or drive-thru windows were not one way, or what if there were hundreds of ways to open the lock on your front door? Not only can it make the most sense, but sometimes it can also be extremely comforting to know there is only one way. Many of our Off the Cuff questions send us looking for answers to an age-old mystery: How can mankind make his way to God? This week in our Life Groups, we'll tackle some tough questions on a very distinct message—one where Jesus stated, "I am the Way."

Where Am I Today?

- 1) Which options do you have in life that you most appreciate? Can you recall a time that having too many options cost you or left you with regret?
- 2) There are seemingly unlimited options in the types of religious beliefs to choose from. We've seen mankind trying to make sense of creation as far back as we have record. Have you been exposed to different belief systems? How were you led to investigate the claims of Christ?

Into the Bible

- 3) "Is Jesus the only way to God?" Since the inception of the first church, this question was, and still remains, popular.
- a) **Read John 14:5-7.** What can you take away from how Jesus responded to Thomas?

 - b) What is meant by the Way? **Read Acts 4:8-12; 9:1-2** for more insight.

 - c) Do the previous verses suggest Jesus is the only way?
- 4) "Why is it that Jesus has to be the only way?" "I'm basically a good person, so I should go to heaven." "Just because I don't believe in Jesus, doesn't mean I don't believe in God." Are these statements accurate? As logical as they sound, our "options-filled" lives are about to be narrowed a bit. Let us look to how this topic was viewed by first century Christians. Read the following verses and discuss them from a perspective of obtaining salvation.
- a) **Titus 3:4-7**
 - b) **Colossians 1:19-20**
 - c) **Romans 3:23-24**
- 5) "The Jews, Israel, they are Gods chosen people." We have possibly heard this before, but where do they fit in the big picture? And will Jews go to heaven?
- a) What people became known as the Jews? **Read Matthew 1:2; Genesis 32:28; Genesis 46:2-7; Exodus 1:1-7; Exodus 6:2-6 and Joshua 1:1-6.**

- b) Did you realize that how they came to be was that simple?
- c) Not by race, nor stature, nor some mysterious genetic code were a group of humans chosen to be God's chosen people. What is it that God seeks in man?
Read John 4:19-26 for insight.
- d) Will Jews today be in heaven? Isn't the race of Jewish people God's chosen even today? **Read Galatians 3:26-29.**

6) "Do Christianity and Islam really worship the same God?" This is commonly asked as many believe Ishmael from Genesis 16 to be where Muslims originated. Although this topic can be highly debated, we can look to the writings of Muhammad called The Qur'an, and draw comparison to the nature of God as we find in the Bible.

The Qur'an, written after 600 CE, is regarded by Muslims as the main miracle of Muhammad and proof of his prophethood. The Qur'an teaches in Surah 4 (The Women):171, "O followers of the Book! Do not exceed the limits in your religion, and do not speak (lies) against Allah, but (speak) the truth; the Messiah, Isa son of Marium *is only an apostle* of Allah and His Word which he communicated to Marium and a spirit from Him; believe therefore in Allah and His apostles *and say not, Three.* Desist, it is better for you; Allah is only one God, *far be it from His glory to have a son,* whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His, and Allah is sufficient for a Protector [*italics added*]."

Look at the following verses and conclude if both worship the same God:

- a) **John 14:8-11**
- b) **Colossians 1:15-17**
- c) **Hebrews 6:19-7:3**
- d) **Matthew 28:18-19**
- e) **John 1:1-3**

How Does This Apply?

- 7) “What if Christians are wrong and we end up somewhere we don’t want to be?” What is it that scares us about that statement? Could it be that it’s the same thing that scares us to think there is only one way to the Father? We want options to live out life our way, and still have hope of a warm fuzzy eternity. Look at the following verses:
- a) **Acts 19:8-10.** Will everyone buy in to the Good News of Christ?

 - b) **Romans 3:3-4.** If some do not believe, does it make God less true?

 - c) Have you experienced Christ? Have you felt Him calling you to himself? It is easy to dismiss Christ until you experience Him firsthand. **Read Hebrews 2:2-4.**

Digging Deeper on Your Own

- 8) This weekend Ibrahim Sani spoke of how Christ met him in Nigeria. I remember meeting Ibrahim some months ago and hearing him share his story of how on his way to burn down another Christian church, Jesus froze him in his tracks and revealed Himself. I was impacted by how Christ loves us so much that He is willing to cross seemingly impassable boundaries. **Read Acts 9:1-19.** Do you see the similarities in Ibrahim’s story and Saul’s?
- a) “Is God faithful to get his message to the most remote parts of the world?”
Read Romans 1:18-20.

 - b) “Is there any proof that God can use our environment to speak to us?”
Read Exodus 3; Numbers 22:21-34.

 - c) “Doesn’t this contradict with Jesus being the only way?” **Read Acts 1:1-9.** What power came to us in place of Jesus?