



Off the Cuff: Part Five - Study Guide

October 14, 2012

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One day, while eating lunch in the cafeteria with my then 7-year-old son, I found myself back at the very elementary school I attended as a child. I remember thinking about how small things were in comparison to what it seemed like back when I was a student.

Physically, nothing had changed. The teachers, classrooms, and hallways hadn't shrunk—but my perspective had changed. What was once complicated and enormous now seemed small and simple. So, what causes that change, exactly? This week we'll look at some tough questions that will possibly have us revisit a familiar place, and hopefully with a more complete perspective. Ask for God's wisdom in your study time and as we dig into some Off the Cuff questions about salvation in Christ.

Where Am I Today?

- 1) Do you remember your first attempt at trying to swim? Did someone ever have to pull you from the water because you were in danger? Have you experienced being rescued, or known someone that has been rescued from a life event?

- 2) What are some non-crisis situations that people would like to be rescued from in everyday life? Is Jesus the first one we usually turn to? What is salvation in your own words?

OFF THE CUFF

PART FIVE – STUDY GUIDE

Into the Bible

- 3) "Can I be saved by faith alone?" "What does works have to do with being saved, if anything?" These are great questions and are an excellent place to start. Faith is simply the earnest belief and trust in the things of Jesus with no hesitation in who He is and His faithfulness to complete all He promised. "But can this alone save me?" As the good news of Christ was being spread throughout the 1st century, much confusion arose as folks were very accustomed to a performance-based way of life. It was a logical progression to apply this mindset to things of a spiritual nature.
 - a) **Read Ephesians 2:8.** Depending on the version of the Bible you are reading, what does it mean by "not by your works," "not from yourselves" or "not by your own doing"?
 - b) **Read Titus 3:4-7.** What does it mean to be justified by grace?

- 4) "Is there a difference between believing in Jesus in your mind and having a heart change for the things of Christ?" **Read Isaiah 29:13-14, Matthew 15:7-9, Proverbs 23:26 and Hebrews 11:6.** What does it mean to have a heart for Christ and to seek after Him? Have you experienced a time where you believed Jesus was real, but were not really committed to Him?

- 5) "How can I know I am saved?" This is the most important question I believe to be asked from anyone. **Matthew 7:21-23 and Luke 18:26-27** suggest a legitimate concern. Could you imagine a marriage where there was no relationship, or a friendship where you just read about each other yet never experienced each other?

OFF THE CUFF

PART FIVE – STUDY GUIDE

- a) What is Jesus trying to help us understand in **Matthew 7:21-23?**

- b) **Romans 10:9-13** seems to be hinting at something greater going on here with the depth in which we believe. Discuss.

- c) You have heard the phrase, "Hurt people, hurt people." We are all born into a selfish nature, and we can continue to pass it along day by day to everyone in our lives. What would cause a person to deviate from being self-focused or selfishly motivated? **Read Romans 2:4.**

- d) **Read Galatians 5:22-25 and John 13:34-35.** What are some things a person will truly start to experience in this new life of salvation?

- e) Does this mean I am finished with the temptation and struggle of my old habits? **Discuss Romans 7:13-25.**

How Does This Apply?

- 6) "Can I lose my salvation?" This past weekend Pastor Dan Roseman reframed the question and said, "Could this question possibly be better stated as, 'Can Christ lose me?'" This brings out a wonderful truth that we may have overlooked! Would bringing this topic back to our childhood elementary school, so to speak, give us a broader view and understanding? Take a look at the following questions and verses:
 - a) Why do we have need of salvation? **Read Romans 3:22-23; 5:12.**

 - b) Who authored salvation, God or us? **Read John 3:16.**

OFF THE CUFF

PART FIVE – STUDY GUIDE

- c) The Law was a heavenly standard given to us through Moses. Did our performance by those standards grant us salvation? **Read Galatians 3:2-11.**

- d) **Read Romans 8:32-39.** Does this give you the impression there is something that God is unaware of prior to your salvation?

- e) **Ephesians 2:8-9** speaks of a gift. The usage of the word gift here means, “a gift, a present; offered in expression of honor.” Sometimes people give gifts with strings attached. Do we assume the same of God?

Digging Deeper on Your Own

- 7) There is a message of restoration being given to us by God. We know that decay and death entered into the world through what happened in Genesis 3, and that God’s plan is great enough overcome this. But, what is it exactly? How will we be a part? Does salvation bring in a larger picture? **Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, Hebrews 10:11-18 and Colossians 1:17-20.**