



10 Reasons to Believe Real Christians Can Look Like They're Not!

Programmed Syllabus

An RBC Ministries
Day of Discovery Study

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Course Description

Hypocrites. The word carries with it a sneer and a skeptical view of a person's religious claims. In fact, religious people are still only people—people who are flawed, weak, and sometimes failing. The question is, can someone experience times of spiritual failure and still truly be a person of faith? This course, **10 Reasons to Believe Real Christians Can Look Like They're Not**, will examine ten converging lines of evidence that can give clarity to a confusing issue.

Course Objectives

- To introduce students to the basic fundamentals of the Christian faith
- To provide scholarly and historical evidence for the validity of Christianity
- To encourage logical thinking in evaluating the authenticity of the teachings of Jesus and of the Bible

Course Methods

Throughout this course, a number of methods will be used to engage the students in learning and processing information, interacting with other students, and applying the learning to their lives. These methods include the following:

Media/Materials

The course will include media presentations of lectures and supplementary materials to be viewed, listened to, and/or read throughout the ten lessons of the course. Details on these materials will follow in the Course Requirements section.

Interaction

Whether sitting in a traditional classroom or studying from a distance, students benefit from interaction and collaboration with other students. In order to meet this need in distance theological education, ChristianCourses.com offers structures and resources to encourage effective community interaction in this course.

ChristianCourses.com Online Interactivity Forum fosters peer-to-peer interaction in a global, threaded discussion. Students are required to respond to

relevant questions posted by the instructors; students are also encouraged to read and respond to the posts of fellow students.

Reflection

Through journaling and the use of interactive exercises, ChristianCourses.com provides many opportunities for students to reflect on what they have learned, what they believe, and where they are challenged. The goal of these reflections is personal spiritual growth and transformation.

Web Journal

Many of the assignments ask students to record their thoughts in a Course Journal. Students may use a paper notebook for this, or, as an alternative, they may use the Web Journal to record thoughts and reflections as they go through the course. Web Journal entries can be viewed only by the student and by the site administrator, but are not graded.

Lesson Objectives

At the end of each lesson, students should be able to accomplish the objectives listed below.

Lesson 1: Disappointment with God

- Discuss the reasons for many Christians' disappointment with God
- Explain, using a biblical example, the idea of bargaining in terms of relationship with God
- Describe, using a biblical example, the concept of unmet expectations and how that feeling affects relationship with God.
- Demonstrate understanding of the materials by scoring 70% or better on the quiz

Lesson 2: Distraction

- Describe, from experience and Scripture, how real Christians can become distracted from following what they believe
- Provide at least two possible causes of Christians choosing to lower moral or spiritual standards.
- Demonstrate understanding of the materials by scoring 70% or better on the quiz

Lesson 3: Dangerous Relationships

- Explain, using biblical support, people of Jesus' day seeing Him as a "friend of sinners."
- Describe ways in which Jesus' strong sense of purpose affected His dealings with people
- Evaluate today's relationships in light of Jesus' example and teaching
- Demonstrate understanding of the materials by scoring 70% or better on the quiz

Lesson 4: Unchanged Tendencies

- Discuss, using several Bible references, the conflict in Christians between self-interest and the influence of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.
- Explain why Christians shouldn't be surprised when they sin or when they see other Christians sin
- Expound on the biblical teaching that the need for forgiveness does not end at the point of salvation
- Support biblically the concept of transformation into the image of Christ.
- Demonstrate understanding of the materials by scoring 70% or better on the quiz

Lesson 5: Self-Reliance

- Explain the Bible's basic teaching about self-reliance.
- Describe Christian decision-making that uses both good judgment and dependence upon God.
- Recount with understanding the Bible's teaching that God recognizes human faults, imperfections, and weaknesses
- Demonstrate understanding of the materials by scoring 70% or better on the quiz

Lesson 6: Prayerlessness

- Explain how it is possible that a true Christian might not appear to be different than a non-Christian

- List several reasons for prayer being necessary to develop a personal relationship with God
- Recount the Bible's teaching, using specific references, that a lack of meaningful prayer is a reason for spiritual defeat
- Demonstrate understanding of the materials by scoring 70% or better on the quiz

Lesson 7: Carelessness

- Explain the role that carelessness plays in causing some people to appear they are not genuine Christians
- Give examples of God-defying behavior that may be caused by carelessness.
- List several possible results of carelessness in the life of a Christian.
- Demonstrate understanding of the materials by scoring 70% or better on the quiz

Lesson 8: An Unexamined Heart

- Explain how unrecognized motives can result in complicated forms of self-deception
- Describe, based on Psalm 51, the way in which honest prayer will often disclose the existence of spiritual weakness
- Demonstrate understanding of the materials by scoring 70% or better on the quiz

Lesson 9: An Unseen Enemy

- Define the concept of spiritual warfare
- Begin to recognize spiritual warfare that is taking place in this world
- Understand the difference between temptation and sin and the relationship of Satan to each
- Explain how Satan's strategies can get people to think in ways that are separate from a relationship with God
- Demonstrate understanding of the materials by scoring 70% or better on the quiz

Lesson 10: A Lack of Accountability

- Explain the importance of Christians being trained in God's ways
- Understand and recount the biblical basis for Christians being accountable to one another

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- Describe what a biblically sound accountability relationship might look like
- Demonstrate understanding of the materials by scoring 70% or better on the quiz

Course Requirements

In order to receive a certificate of completion, the student must complete the course requirements within a 180-day period. Those requirements include

- Listening to (or reading) the lectures for each lesson
- Reading Bible passages as assigned for each lesson
- Completing the Bible studies as assigned for each lesson
- Completing additional topical reading assignments for each lesson
- Participating in the online interactive forum
- Keeping a journal in response to reflection questions and Bible studies
- Taking ten quizzes and a final examination, scoring 70% or higher.

Additional information about these requirements is provided below.

Video-based teaching

The primary teaching session in each lesson is provided in streaming video in the Flash video format (FLV). For international or domestic students who do not have the bandwidth required to view the video (384 Kbps DSL minimum), we provide the option of listening to the teaching via Flash audio files or reading the lesson from a transcript of the teaching video. The transcripts contain screen captured images of important images in the video.

Multisensory learning

Because the primary teaching information is provided in video, audio and PDF text documents, students can choose the medium (or combination of media) that most closely aligns with their individual learning styles. Multiple options are also provided for students with auditory and visual learning challenges.

Readings and other media

Students should have a copy of the Bible available in order to read the Bible passages assigned in each lesson. In addition, students will note that Scripture passages are linked to online Bible tools for convenience. These online resources also provide an opportunity for students for whom English is a second language to

read the Bible passages in one of numerous international translations available.

For all other required reading assignments, ChristianCourses.com provides the texts for this course in a downloadable Adobe® PDF format.

- **Bible reading/study:** The Bible reading or study assignments covered in this course should be read completely at least once and journal responses to questions are to be recorded in the students' journals. Each assignment should be read in the context of the lesson that covers that particular passage or topic.

- **Teaching videos:** Each of the lessons in this course contains a teaching video of approximately four to ten minutes in length. These instructional videos are required viewing, and can be watched as many times as needed. The same content is available in an audio file and a text file (PDF) for students who can benefit from these alternative media.
 - *Disappointment with God*
 - *Distraction*
 - *Dangerous Relationships*
 - *Unchanged Tendencies*
 - *Self-Reliance*
 - *Prayerlessness*
 - *Carelessness*
 - *An Unexamined Heart*
 - *An Unseen Enemy*
 - *A Lack of Accountability*

- **Additional reading:** Students will be required to read supplementary materials for many of the lessons. Those materials are listed below and are provided in download format from the Additional Reading section of each lesson:
 - *When Disappointment Deceives*
 - *The Way Back*
 - *The Forgiveness of God*
 - *What Is a Personal Relationship with God?*
 - *Self Esteem: What Does the Bible Say?*
 - *Praying with Confidence: Overcoming Disappointment in Prayer*
 - *Why Does It Make Sense to Believe in Christ?*
 - *Do I Have the Right Kind of Faith?*
 - *How Do You Live the Christian Life?*
 - *Transformed Lives*

NOTE: The above-listed Additional Reading is assigned as part of the ChristianCourses.com lecture series. Additional study on this topic can be found in many publications including the following recommended books:

The Christian Mind, Harry S. Blamires
Prayer, Richard Foster
Decision Making and the Will of God, Garry Friesen

All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes: Christians and Popular Culture,
Kenneth Myers
Amusing Ourselves to Death, Neil Postman
The Consequences of Ideas, R. C. Sproul
Understanding Christ, John R. W. Stott
Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture,
Gene Edward Veith
Moral Darwinism: How We Became Hedonists, Benjamin Wiker
Disappointment with God, Philip Yancey

- **Glossary terms:**

Throughout the course, students will find glossary terms highlighted with hyperlink connections to explanations and definitions. Students should become familiar with these words and their meanings as a requirement of this coursework.

Exams

The exams will cover the material from the recorded lectures, Bible reading, other reading, and the presentations. The Bible reading and textbooks should be read in accordance with the schedule of lectures as outlined in this syllabus (i.e., assigned chapters and pages should be read along with listening to each lecture).

Online Forum

Participants will interact with other students worldwide in an ongoing asynchronous threaded discussion of several course topics in each lesson.

In order to get the fullest benefit from the Forum, students should complete the forum assignment after they have listened to all the lectures. Then they should return to the forum after finishing the course to see how others respond. The following steps are instructions to the students for completing the assignment:

- Read the question(s) posted by the instructor in the *Thinking Through* section

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of each lesson.

- Choose the corresponding discussion topic.
- Read the question again and share your thoughts with others.
- Take the time to read other students' postings.

Objective: to develop critical thinking skills through personal interaction with the content of the course and the responses of others within a diverse community of learners.

Personal Reflection and Evaluation

To integrate academic studies with the walk of faith, students are asked to reflect on the content of the course and evaluate their lives in light of what has been learned. The following questions will guide that individual reflection process:

Step 1: Review

Think about the material you have studied in this course. Then ask these questions: What are one or two things you learned that you did not know before this study? What was there in the teaching that made you look at the Bible or something in the Bible in a new way?

Step 2: Assess

Think about your life, both past and present. Given the insights or understanding that you gained in this course, what changes do you need to make in the way you think or behave?

Step 3: Apply

What specific steps will you take in order to put these positive changes (from Step 2) into practice in your life?

Step 4: Record

Write your responses to the above reflections in your journal (web, notebook, or computer)

Community Reflection and Interaction

Step 1: Choose

Since the Holy Spirit uses the input of others to guide and form His people, share what you learned from this course with another person. You might choose from these categories of people in your life:

- Someone with whom you have a close relationship
- Someone who is a mature Christian ministry leader

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- Someone who is not a family member
- Someone who values the spiritual formation process
- Someone who is familiar with and values the subject of the course
- Someone who has experience using the content of the course in ministry

Step 2: Discuss

Ask that person what advice, deeper insights, or broader applications they might offer from their own life and experience.

Step 3: Respond

In light of the course content and your discussions with another person, do you believe that the assessment and application decisions you reached are appropriate? Why or why not? Add your thoughts and insights to your journal.

NOTE: The degree of effort students put into this assignment will determine its benefit. If by the end of this course students have not yet reflected critically on life in light of what has been studied, this assignment will be a helpful guide in that spiritually transforming process.

Course Grading and Requirements

Quizzes and Exams

Quizzes40% of Course Grade

Final Exam 60% of Course Grade

Other Course Requirements

Other course requirements noted in this syllabus will be validated before a Certificate of Completion is awarded to any student.

Course Use in Church Settings and Small Groups

This course can easily be used in a small group or church setting. In that case, the

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following suggestions might be helpful in order to gain maximum benefit from all of the resources available relate to this study.

Step 1: Online access

You might choose to promote the program as Transform University, "Transform U" (see Romans 12:2) and point participants to their free registration at <http://christiancourses.com/tu>.

Step 2: Study method

Select the course or course series that the group will study together and suggest that participants study the lessons on their own during the week.

Step 3: Group meetings

Option 1: The course facilitator, after previous study of the course, reviews the lesson objectives with the group (see lesson objectives) and then opens the discussion based upon the Online Forum questions and the Personal Reflection and Evaluation questions offered for each course.

Option 2: The course facilitator, using an Internet-connected video projector, plays select portions of the course and then opens the discussion around the Online Forum questions for each lesson. Subject to time availability, the facilitator may also use the Personal Reflection and Evaluation questions in group discussion. If live Internet connection is not convenient, some courses are also available for download or on disc.

Step 4: Certification

Upon completion of each course, students can submit their completed requirements to ChristianCourses.com for validation and then bring their Course Completion Certificate to the facilitator.

Step 5: For Further Study

Teachers have the option of combining courses into learning units by using multiple courses together. Examples:

- Bible Basics (using *Old and New Testament Basics, How to Study the Bible, and 10 Reasons to Believe in the Bible* courses)
- Theology Basics (using the *First Steps in the Christian Faith* series)
- First Steps in Christian Counseling (using the *SoulCare* series)

Step 6: Curriculum feedback

Submit your curriculum ideas to ChristianCourses.com so we can

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evaluate them and promote the ideas to others!

Notes Regarding This Syllabus

This syllabus is designed to provide learners with an overview of the course. Specific assignments are contained in each lesson.

Individuals taking the class for academic credit are responsible for the syllabus requirements of the specific institution through which the course is offered. Each individual institution has reserved the right to add additional reading requirements and to alter the syllabus to meet their accreditation requirements. Students seeking academic credit should check with their academic institution for details.

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