

Session 1: *What Does It Take To Survive? Am I Ready?* Rvsd 4.19.10

Introduction

How is survival like hitting the bullseye of a target? The bullseye represents the core essentials for life. These essentials are true even if you can't see them, hit them, even if don't agree with them. If you can see the bullseye, and if you can hit it, you live. If you are distracted by all the stuff around the edges, you can die.

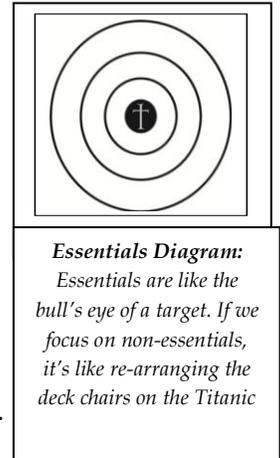
A bullseye can also portray some dangerous things that may be targeting our hearts. We might not see them. But knowing our enemies helps us take steps to protect ourselves.

What does it take to survive? Physically, the bullseye contains basic essentials like oxygen, temperature, water, and food. If we know how to test ourselves for these things, and develop proper skills to protect them, we live. If we don't test ourselves now and don't develop these skills before we experience a deadly attack, injury or disease, we may die.

When was the last time you had a physical? By checking a few essential things doctors often catch serious problems long before they get out of hand. Sometimes they can even save a life. What if someone is injured or unconscious? What do you do first? Check their vital signs, right? Pulse, breathing, blood pressure, temperature... These basic signs of life can tell us if someone is at risk. They can mean life or death.

What if the same is true spiritually: What if we all have certain spiritual essentials that are necessary for life and health? Do you know what these spiritual vital signs and how to test for them? How to develop skills to ensure that you can protect them?

In this session, we will look at these spiritual life and death issues, and how we can test ourselves for the spiritual essentials. Most people never ask these questions. Perhaps you have never taken a look at your spiritual life in this way before. You have just assumed that you are ready for anything.. But *how do you know, if you don't check?*



PREVIEW OF SESSION: CHART THE COURSE

Here is what to expect in this session:

- 1. Connecting with others: Link up with a person and idea (pairs).**
- 2. Exploring the Topic: What Does It Take To Survive? Am I Ready? (group and pairs)**
- 3. Teamwork/Prayer Partner: How can this topic affect your life this week? (group and pairs)**
- 4. Assignment for next week: Be ready to report on this.**

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS: LINK UP WITH A PERSON AND IDEA

Before we begin, briefly discuss the following in pairs:

1. Introduce yourselves: Name, family, job, and one thing that makes you unique.
2. Give one reason why you are exploring this Survival Group

EXPLORING THE TOPIC: WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO SURVIVE? AM I READY?

Exploring the Topic: Overview

In order to explore this concept we will look at six things:

1. What does “survival” mean? What are the essentials for physical survival?
2. Are there other examples from my experience or in the world around me that are essential regardless of opinions? Could this also be true of the spiritual world?
3. What are the essentials for spiritual survival? Do I have them? What about my loved ones?
4. Why is it important to ask and test for the essentials?
5. What if I have questions? Is Jesus open to being examined? Do I have a safe place to ask my most important questions?
6. Am I willing to test for the essentials?

Examples From Our World: What Can We Learn Here?

Personal Experience (Discuss in pairs)

Give a **two minute story** of when you survived something in any category: physical, financial, emotional, marital, etc.

or...

In your experience, where else have you seen something that was essential even if you could not see it, or if people did not agree: (medical tests, checking oil in your car, financial reports, plug in your boat,)

The Natural World (Discuss as a group)

What does “survival” mean? What do we need to survive physically?

Where else in the natural world do you see something that is essential regardless of people’s opinions?

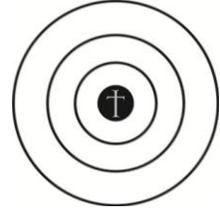
Transition to the Spiritual World

Could it be that essentials in the natural world actually point us to essentials in the spiritual world?

Have you ever considered that you might need certain things spiritually even more than physically?

Input From God's Word: What Does the Bible Actually Say?

*Jesus said, "The thief comes only to **steal and kill and destroy**;
I have come that you may have **life**, and have it to the full."
John 10:10*



Essentials Diagram:
Essentials are like the bull's eye of a target. If we focus on non-essentials, it's like re-arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic

What is it about Jesus that leads to life, or if missed leads to death? In this verse, Jesus made it shockingly clear that there are certain essentials that lead to life.

Without them we are in danger of death. We will have life stolen from us.

But we can have this life if we know what is essential for that life, if we know what is essential about him. How did Jesus teach his disciples about these essentials?

Read Matthew 16:13-16

What does Jesus teach us here about asking spiritual questions? He gives us permission to explore and ask honest questions. He makes clear that it's important to ask what we think of him and not assume we understand. He tests his disciples for clarity. He challenges them to choose whom they will trust. And he shows them the importance of the Reality Principle. Let's explore this text to see these things at work.

1. What does Jesus first ask His disciples?
2. What opinions did others have about Jesus?

Even if sincere, were these conflicting opinions accurate?
3. What does Jesus next ask His disciples?
4. How does Peter answer?
5. How did Jesus respond to Peter's declaration? Where did Peter get this information? (How revealed to him?)
6. What was Jesus teaching his disciples by having this discussion?
7. What is the point he is making here?

We see here that Jesus equipped his disciples to survive by applying the Reality Principle.

Be very clear about the bullseye; be sure about the essential things.

It's OK to discuss other opinions, but do not be misled by them.

This principle became foundational for every decision they would make, for life, or for death.

This is foundational for us as well. It is the core of every session, so let's introduce it here:

The Reality Principle

“Biblical faith is choosing to live according to reality, not according to the fantasies of my emotions, circumstances, or cultural trends.”

NOT REAL: <i>emotions, circumstances, cultural trends</i>	REAL: <i>True, whether I believe it or not</i>
How did the other people arrive at their opinions about Jesus?	How did Peter arrive at the right conclusion?

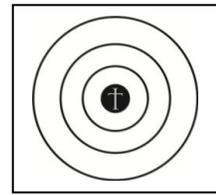
What other biblical examples communicate this need to **explore** the truth, **test** for clarity, and **trust** God’s revelation rather than our opinions?

1 Peter 3:15 – Peter, one of Jesus disciples, shows how much Jesus teachings impacted him. He emphasizes that we must be prepared to answer core questions about Jesus with clarity and confidence. What does it mean to “set apart Christ as Lord? “
What does it mean to be prepared to give a defense/reason for your hope?
Why are gentleness and respect important?

2 Peter 1:12-15 – Peter also expresses Jesus’ passion to test his people as he declares his intention to always remind them of the essentials so that they will remember. His example shows that it is loving to ask someone what they think of Jesus. Has anyone loved you enough to ask you about your spiritual essentials?

There are many others: Genesis 3:9; 22:1; 2 Samuel 12:9; Isaiah 40; and John 6:67 are just a few. In fact, with these things in mind you will look at the Bible with new eyes and notice that everywhere:

1. **God invites inquiry.** He wants us to explore him, ask honest questions, and see if he stands up to scrutiny.
2. **God tests for clarity.** Repeatedly, God asks questions or puts people through tests so that they will demonstrate their allegiance to him.
3. **God challenges us to trust him,** which is a **choice** according to the Reality Principle.



What are the Spiritual Essentials? Can I see the bullseye? Can I hit it?

We see in God's Word that there are at least thirteen things that are essential for spiritual survival. These are not mere beliefs. They are **core convictions** about reality that shape every area of our lives. Without these essentials in place, that is, without certainty and clarity on these convictions, you are at risk and in danger. But if you will test yourself for certainty and clarity on these convictions, you can ensure your survival and protect yourself from dangers. You can also help others do the same.

1. *God*: I am confident God is real and reliable.
2. *Bible*: I am confident the Bible is reliable.
3. *Jesus*: I am confident Jesus is God and the Savior of the world.
4. *Rescued*: I am confident I have been rescued and have a relationship with God.
5. *Growth*: I know and am practicing several faith steps that will produce growth in my life.
6. *Fruits*: I know these foundations will transform all areas of my life.
7. *Assurance*: I am confident God has adopted me and will stay with me forever.
8. *Forgiveness*: I am confident God has forgiven me, freed from sin.
9. *Word*: The Bible is the ultimate authority in my life, and others can tell.
10. *Power*: I am confident God gives me power to live the way I should.
11. *New Identity*: I am truly able to live out of my new identity in Christ.
12. *Community*: I have connections with real people who are also walking with Jesus.
13. *Sharing*: I confidently share the good news of Jesus Christ with others.

What are your thoughts as you look over this list? How many can you confidently check off?

Not important

Absolutely crucial

Circle the number representing your certainty about the importance of these spiritual essentials:

-10

-5

0

+5

+10

TEAMWORK/PRAYER PARTNER: HOW CAN THIS TOPIC AFFECT YOUR LIFE THIS WEEK?

Discuss the following with your partner. Start now, and check in with each other through the week.

1. *General*: What is most helpful from this session? What is difficult? How clear am I?
2. *Specific*: How does this affect specific areas of my life?
3. *Faith steps*: How much do I live as though this is true? What practical steps do I need to take in order to live according to reality? Who else can I share this with?

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK: BE READY TO REPORT ON THIS.

Before next week's meeting, do the following to help you further understand and apply this session.

1. *Keep Your Eyes Open*: Look for other things in your life or the natural world around you that are essential for survival regardless of people's opinions. Write down any examples you see.
2. *Reinforce Your Learning*: Review the passages in this session again. You know you understand them if you can explain it to a 10 year old. Can you?
3. *Apply the Reality Principle*: What are your emotions, circumstances, and cultural trends saying about the spiritual world? How do those things stand up to Jesus' example and teaching?
4. *Share with Someone Else*: Look for an opportunity to share these concepts with another person or ask them for their perspective.

Forecasting Session 2: How Are My Foundations?

The next session looks at the spiritual essentials from a different angle. They also serve as foundations for building a strong, stable, and lasting life. In other teachings, Jesus took his followers below the surface to look at what their lives were built on. The substructures determine just how stable the building is, and the same is true in the spiritual world: ***The hidden substructures of our lives determine just how stable our lives are.*** How can we "see" hidden dangers and hidden treasures?

Work through these questions to prepare for that discussion:

1. What are you building your life on (e.g., core beliefs, assumptions, behaviors, etc.)? What are your unseen foundations? In other words, if you were to pass on your top 10 core convictions to someone you love, what would you pass on to that person?
2. How and when did you form these beliefs, assumptions, and behaviors? Were these influences reliable?
3. How have these affected what is above ground? What has been the result of these in your life?
4. Read Matthew 7:21-24 , Hidden dangers and Matthew 13:44 Hidden treasures