

What Is a Christian?

Introduction

1. **According to the New York Times it is reported that 214 million people consider themselves Christians!**
 - A. **Of that number 50 million are evangelical.**
2. **With so many claiming to be a Christian I believe we need to find out what a Christian really is.**
3. **We can learn from Acts 5 that Christians had an influence on the world.**

Acts 5:16-17 Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed. Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation,

Acts 5:28 saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!"

- A. **Christians were determined to spread the news of Christ during the time of the apostles.**

- 1) **They continued to learn and gain knowledge. The same New York Times report also indicated that only 11% of Christians read their Bible daily.**

4. Therefore, What is a true Christian?

- A. **Webster's New World Dictionary:** A person professing belief in Jesus as the Christ, or in the religion based on the teachings of Jesus; a decent, respectable person of Jesus Christ, the teachings of Christ, or a religion based on teachings of Christ; Having the qualities demonstrated and taught by Jesus Christ, as love, kindness, etc.;
- 1) Anyone can profess to have these qualities as defined by Webster - but does that make them a true Christian?
- B. We must go to God's word - the Bible to find out what a Christian really is.

What Is a Christian?

1. First let's examine the verse found in Acts 11:26:

Acts 11:26 And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

- A. We see that a Christian is a disciple of Christ.
- B. A disciple "taught people." What were the people taught?

Acts 11:19-20 Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus.

- 2) They were taught "the word" and "the Lord Jesus."

2. Let's find out what that means.

Acts 8:4

A. They preached the word of Jesus and we can find out even more from verse 12.

Acts 8:12

B. Later in this chapter we can see where an Ethiopian Eunuch was reading from the prophet Isaiah but did not really understand what he was reading.

Acts 8:32-33

1) He asked Philip to explain

Acts 8:34

2) Philip (A Christian) preached "Jesus" to him.

Acts 8:35

3) After he was "taught" by a "disciple" he heard, believed, confessed, and was baptized.

Acts 8:36-38

3. He was baptized and as a result became a Christian and was at that point added to the Lord's church.

Acts 11:21-24

4. Again, what does this all mean?

A. We can go back to Acts chapter 2 and see that the Jews were "taught words".

Acts 2:22

B. As a result they believed, repented, and were baptized.

Acts 2:36-38

C. All who were baptized were added to the church and continued to devote themselves to the Lord - which means they will now "teach" others about "Jesus."

Acts 2:41-42

D. These individuals were being saved the same way we are today – they became Christians.

Acts 2:47

5. So, what's the point of these scriptures?

A. A Christian is one that is taught, believes, repents, confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, is baptized for the remission of sins, is added to the Lord's church and then continues in the word.

1) This is a true Christian - anyone else that claims to be a Christian and has not followed this New Testament example cannot be a true Christian!

Additional Information Concerning a Christian

1. To be a Christian it requires "belief".

Acts 26:27-28

A. But belief in what?

1) About Christ and His resurrection from the dead.

Acts 26:22-23

2) About what a Christian really is.

Acts 26:28

a) What do you suppose that Agrippa understood a Christian to really be?

Acts 26:20, 29

b) Paul had been preaching to Agrippa. Agrippa understood what it took to become a Christian:

- To repent, turn to God, do the deeds that prove one has repented, and live a life as Paul did for Christ.
- **Agrippa was not ready to be a Christian!**

2. To be a Christian means being ready to be persecuted for your belief in Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 4:14-16

A. This kind of belief is recognized through obedience to the gospel of God.

1 Peter 4:17

- B. It is a belief that is righteous.**
1 Peter 4:18
- C. It is a belief that lives "according to the will of God and commits one's soul to Him in good works".**
1 Peter 4:19

The Real Meaning of Being a Christian

- 1. Jesus discouraged individuals from thinking that being a Christian was something to be taken lightly. It is not easy to be a Christian - a TRUE CHRISTIAN.**
- 2. Jesus must come first - before anyone else.**
Luke 14:25-27
 - A. We must consider the cost of discipleship:**
Luke 14:28
 - 1) Jesus emphasizes to all not to be foolish. Don't say you're going to follow Him if you are not prepared to count what it will cost you.**
 - In many cases – it means a complete change in lifestyle!**
- 3. Jesus can't be second place!**
Matthew 10:34-39
- 4. Jesus must be first for us to be truly known as a faithful, sincere Christian.**
Luke 9:57-62

Conclusion

1. If you really are the kind of Christian that is defined in the Bible then you will **INFLUENCE** the world around you – an influence that shows others that you are emulating Christ!
 - A. Do you touch others?
 - B. Do others really see Christ living in you?
2. The true meaning of Christian is belonging to CHRIST:
 - Meaning that CHRIST is living IN US.
 - Take CHRIST out of CHRISTIAN and you have:
I
Am
Nothing
3. Let us all make a commitment in our lives to always keep Christ in us, actively working in us, so we can truly be known as CHRISTIANS!
 - A. The early New Testament disciple Christian!

