

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?

### Acts 11:26

**Introduction:** The word "Christian" has come around to mean less than what it meant when it was first used. It wasn't a complimentary word but a "title" assigned to a strange group who followed some person named "Christ." From that time on, however, the word "Christian" became a strong, impressive, important word because of the people who bore the name. They stood boldly for what God's Word said and declared themselves to be followers of Jesus Christ. Sadly today the word "Christian" doesn't have the influence nor importance it has had in times past.

The word "Christian" has been cheapened by common usage and it is a "catch-all" phrase that covers a multitude of religious ideas mixed with error, truth, and even paganism.

"Christian" has been stretched to cover everything from gross worldliness to pharisaic self righteousness. It can mean ritualistic as well as emotionalism. Could it be that the fall of the Christian reputation is due to the fact that not many really know what it means to be a genuine, real Christian?

"Christian" is applied to anyone who has high moral values, to anyone who believes in God, to anyone who is a church member (of any kind), but rightly to those who claim to have been born again. The test of who is a Christian and who is not comes in what others think about you. What evidence do you give that you are a Christian? Do others see Christ in you?

"Christians" were first called such at Antioch and it was a derisive term, but it was assigned to people who tried to follow the example of Jesus. They reminded others of the fanatical Jesus. What would your neighbors think about you? Do you remind them of Jesus?

A non-Christian from another part of the world said: "If christians would act like Jesus Christ, half the world would be at His feet."

A genuine Christian is something more than cushioned pews, enjoyable music, comforting sermons and then back to business as usual.

### I. TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN, ONE MUST FIRST BE SAVED

1. It is absolutely impossible for a person to be a christian who has not had a personal, redemptive, experience with Jesus Christ. (*John 3:7*)
2. One must repent, change the mind about God, the nature of sin, one's self and others.
3. Sincere faith must be placed in Jesus Christ as Lord.
4. As a person responds in repentance and faith, the Holy Spirit brings about the New Birth and that person becomes the Child of God, a New Creation.
5. This does not automatically produce "Christ-likeness." It does start the growth and development process.

## **II. TO BE GENUINELY CHRISTIAN, ONE MUST BE TOTALLY SURRENDERED**

1. Jesus was totally surrendered to do God's will. (*John 4:34; Luke 22:42*)
2. Jesus demanded total surrender of His disciples. (*Matthew 4:19-20*)
3. Where does YOUR commitment lead you? What have you left for Jesus Christ?
4. A Christian is one who has been baptized, publicly identifying with Jesus Christ as commanded.
5. A Christian is sincerely committed to living as Jesus taught, with a deep concern for God's Word.
6. A Christian will express commitment in his/her home, community, business and Church.

## **III. TO BE GENUINELY CHRISTIAN, ONE MUST BE SERVING**

1. Jesus served and worked. (*John 5:17; 9:4*)
2. There are many inactive church members, but an inactive Christian is a contradiction of terms. when one ceases to serve, then one cannot be like Jesus Christ or 100% Christian.
3. The true Christian gives of him/herself humbly, with gratitude, without display, wherever and whenever the opportunity arises.

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. To be a Christian, one must be saved.
2. To be a Christian, one must be surrendered.
3. To be a Christian, one must serve.
4. The hymn, "Lord, I want to be a Christian" details the true Christian life.
5. One must be Christ like with the heart and mind before one can be called a "true" Christian.