

Are We Disciples of Jesus Christ?

Mark Stevens (2006)

How would you describe a good Christian? Most people today describe a good Christian as a person who attends Sunday school, attends the worship service, attends prayer meetings and other church activities, gives his tithe, does not smoke or drink, and helps the pastor when asked. But this is not how the Bible describes a Christian.

In the Bible a Christian is a disciple of Christ (Acts 11:26b). What did Jesus say would describe a true disciple of Christ? Let's look at several passages where Jesus told us what a disciple is and compare that with how we described a good Christian. Then we can see if we are disciples of Jesus.

Jesus said we are His disciples if . . .

1. Luke 14:25-27, 33-35

- **We die daily to our desires and even our families desires (Lordship).** We deny our own and our families agenda, ambitions, and desires in order to please God alone. Is what I am doing pleasing God? Are there any of my desires or others desires for me that are being put ahead of God's desires? Am I trying to do all that others expect and what God expects at the same time?
- **We carry our cross daily and follow Christ.** The cross means suffering and shame. We must endure hardship with joy (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). Suffering is to be expected. Are we enduring hardships with joy? Are we thankful even in the midst of suffering and persecution? Are you willing to be shamed for following Jesus?
- **We give up every thing to God (Luke 14:33).** We can not love the things of this world, but instead we live as strangers on the earth, focused on eternal matters (1 John 2:15-17). We need to get rid of idols or other gods and rely on God alone, fearing God alone. God is the owner of everything, we are only stewards. This means that God is the owner of our time, money, possessions, and talents. Are we using these according to what God, our owner has said? What about our relationships, the place we live, our job, habits, goals, or even holding a grudge? Is there anything we are not willing to give up to God? We need to give up our sin by confessing and repenting of them. (This may include restitution.) [Later we will ask you to make a list of sins or things you need to surrender.] If we are not willing to give everything up for Jesus then we are like salt that has lost its saltiness.

2. John 15:7-8

- **We abide in Christ.** This involves a personal relationship with God while living in the Spirit. Our purpose in life is to experience God and to love and glorify Him forever. To abide in Him involves an on-going fellowship with God in a love relationship. We love God with every area of our life (Doing all for the glory of God). We are able to love God as we abide and walk in the power of the His Spirit (Gal. 5:16-25; Ephesians 5:18). Are we constantly abiding in Christ? Does each of us have a consistent special time each day to spend with God (devotion)? Are we living in the power of the Holy Spirit moment by moment so that we do not fall into sin?
- **God's Word abides in us.** We should be hearing God speak daily through His Word and obey it immediately. Abiding in God's Word helps us renew our minds, so we have the Mind of Christ. We need time daily to intake His Word. There are 6 ways that God's Word

remains in us: hearing the Word, reading the Word, studying the Word, memorizing the Word, meditating on the Word, and applying the Word. Is God's Word abiding in us? What will you do to have God's Word abide more in your life?

- **Our prayers are answered.** We can pray fervently in faith, expecting God to answer. He has promised to give us whatever we ask if we are abiding in Him and His Word in us. Do you truly believe this? The Bible says it's true. Are you asking God? Are your prayers being answered?
- **We bear much fruit and God is glorified!** The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. If we are disciples of Christ then these will be the fruit of our lives. Also we can bear fruit by making disciples. How many people have you led to Christ, disciplined and trained as trainers? Is the fruit of the Spirit in abundance in your life? Is God glorified by your life? Are you salt and light in the World?

3. John 8:31-32

- **We hold to (obey) Christ's teaching.** Jesus has taught us what to believe (doctrine) and how to live. If we hold to (obey) His teachings then we will truly be His disciples and will know the truth and be set free. Then we can have the abundant life that God has planned for us. Are your beliefs the same as the Bible or do you base your beliefs more from tradition and your experience? Is there any of Christ's teachings that you are not obeying?

4. John 13:34-35

- **We love one another as Christ loves us.** To love others as Christ loves us we need to seek others interest above our own. We meet the practical needs of believers (including widows, orphans, poor, those in hospitals & prisons). This will include sacrificial giving without expecting anything in return. We will encourage others and love our enemies and those who wrong us. We will seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8). How are you showing love to those in need around you? What loving act can you do to the person who has persecuted or wronged you?

5. Matthew 28:18-20

- **We make disciples of all nations.** We are not true disciples until we are discipling and training others to make disciples of all nations. First this means that we must be truly saved, baptized and obeying all of Christ's Commands. Also it means that:
 - a. We are to be going (Share the Gospel in our Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the Uttermost parts of the world). We need to learn our testimony and at least one way to present the Gospel personally and in groups. Also we need a world vision - how we can practically be involved in missions – making disciples of all nations.
 - b. We are to be baptizing (Baptize those who believe).
 - c. We are to be teaching them to OBEY all Christ's commands - immediate obedience. We are not to just teach them Christ's commands but teach them to obey Christ commands. We must teach in such a way that they obey. If we are not obeying Christ's commands then we are not His disciples.

In the New Testament the disciples made disciples by covenanting together with a group of believers (the church) that would meet regularly and keep each other accountable to make disciples and carry God's mission to all nations (Acts 2:42-47).

Are we making disciples of all nations? Have you placed your faith in Jesus alone to take away your sin? Have you obeyed His command to be baptized? Is there any of His commands that you are not obeying? Are you sharing the Gospel and discipling others? Are you teaching the new believers you led to the Lord to obey all of Christ's commands and make disciples of all nations? Are you in a church that keeps you accountable to do these things? Do they teach you Christ's commands in such a way that expects obedience or is it mostly lecture?

Application to Life Questions:

Review the 10 characteristics of a disciple above. Are you a disciple of Christ? What areas of discipleship do you need improvement? What will you do this week to improve in those areas? You need a plan for how you will obey.

Ask God to show you any sin in your life. Make a list of sins or things you need to surrender. Check off the sin when you have confessed it and turned it over to God. If the sin has resulted in a bad relationship with someone else – reconcile with them before you check it off. When everything is checked off, give your life totally to God as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1) and ask God to fill you with His Spirit (Luke 11:13). (You can use the back of this page if you run out of room.)

Are you making disciples of others? This does not mean that you are just teaching them but teaching them to obey – helping them to do the above. Who could you share the Gospel with or begin to disciple this week?

