

Christian or Christ Follower?

Ready:

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’” -- Matthew 7:21-23

Set

The stadium was filled with fans and spectators who had come to watch the championship game. The coaches and players were all in, having invested 100% of their time, energy, and resources. They had committed their lives to the sport. The stage was set for victory. While the spectators enjoyed watching the game, it was only the coaches and players who were playing the game that determined the outcome. The fans could not influence the final score, only those on the field.

There is a big difference between a spectator and a player or coach. In Kyle Idleman's book, *Not A Fan*, he distinguishes between a fan and a follower of Jesus Christ. It's easy to be a Christian. Jesus died for our sins and we have the free gift of salvation. One might say it cost us nothing. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”*

There is a distinction between being a Christian and a Christ follower. There is a big difference between having religion and having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Many who call themselves Christians may have walked an aisle, said a prayer, read their Bible, listened to worship music, and perhaps been brought up in a Christian home, but are they Christ followers? Being a Christ follower comes at a great cost.

First, it cost Jesus His life! *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8). Jesus, perfect and sinless, died a brutal death on the cross for our sins. Isaiah 53:5 says, *“But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.”*

Second, there is a cost to the Christ follower who is 100% committed to walking in obedience to God's Word every day. They have fully surrendered their lives to Christ. Their daily priority and purpose are focused on God and His plan. They are willing to sacrifice their time, talent, and treasure for God's Kingdom work. They are in the game, on the field, or following the Coach's instructions. They are not in the stands looking on. They are actively engaged, looking to bring glory to God in every play they make in their sport and in life.

Following Jesus means He will make you a fisher of people. That involves both evangelism and discipleship. Being a Christ follower means being prepared at all times to share your faith and help others grow in theirs. It requires recognizing and listening to God's voice and acting on what He says. It entails constant self-denial, humility, and passionately pursuing Jesus Christ. All of the disciples left everything behind to follow Jesus!

Even when counting the cost, Christ followers will be blessed beyond measure and used powerfully by God for His Kingdom work.

Go

- Reflect on the difference between being a Christian as defined by the world and a Christ follower as defined by the Word.
- What areas of your life do you need to surrender to Christ, to leave behind, to follow Him?
- What ways can you become more of a follower of Jesus than a fan?

Workout

Luke 9:23; Matthew 4:18-20; Luke 5:27; 1 Peter 2:21; John 10:27

Overtime

"Father, forgive me for the times that I get off track in following You. Thank You for bringing me back and keeping me on track by the power of Your Holy Spirit. Give me the wisdom and strength to fully surrender my life to You daily so that I may follow You steadfastly."

Bible Reference:

Matthew 7:21-23

Luke 9:23

Matthew 4:18-20

Luke 5:27

1 Peter 2:21

John 10:27



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8701 Leeds Road | Kansas City, MO 64129 | 800.289.0909
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