

# Your Identity In Christ

## You Are A Disciple Of Christ

The Bible demonstrates that those who are in Christ have a rich spiritual identity. This involves being a disciple of Jesus Christ. Yet, while it is common for people to identify as “Christians,” many may be unfamiliar with what it means for Christians to be disciples of Jesus Christ. Still, we see this concept plainly taught in the pages of Scripture (Acts 11:25-26). Therefore, if you are going to fulfill your true purpose in Jesus Christ, you must embrace your identity as a disciple of Jesus Christ and all this involves.

**1) You have chosen to follow Jesus Christ as your Teacher.** As Jesus knew His earthly ministry would be limited, He focused on calling people to be His disciples (Matthew 4:18-22) and later gave them the work of making other disciples for Him (Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Timothy 2:2). This concept of having disciples, though, was not something that was exclusive to Jesus (John 9:28; Matthew 22:15-16; Luke 11:1). For, a disciple simply refers to one who follows another so as to be trained by that one. Therefore, a person must choose who to be trained by (Luke 6:40). Although there are many options in this world, you made the choice to follow and be trained by Jesus whenever you became a Christian. Now, you must continue to choose Jesus as your teacher because you recognize that He is the only one who has the words of eternal life (John 6:60, 66-69; 14:6-7). Therefore, being a disciple of Jesus indicates your goal is to fully follow and be trained by Jesus.

**2) You must learn from Jesus.** If you are going to truly follow Jesus and be trained by Him in your life, you must dedicate yourself to being His life-long student. For, while there are many sources of information in the world, Jesus’s words are the only ones guaranteed to be the

absolute truth (John 8:31-32; 14:6). Furthermore, His words are the words that will judge your life (John 12:48). Those who were Jesus’s disciples during the time He walked this earth would literally follow Him, watch His life, listen to Him, ask Him questions, etc. (Mark 4:34; 10:23-26; 12:43-44). Today, we learn from Jesus today through the words He revealed to the Holy Spirit that the apostles and prophets wrote down in the New Testament (John 14:25-26; Ephesians 3:3-5; 1 Corinthians 14:37). Through these New Testament teachings, we can learn how Jesus lived and what He teaches so we can live pleasing to God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3). Consequently, those who are committed to being Jesus’s disciples will devote time to learning from Him through Bible study (1 Peter 2:2-3; Hebrews 5:12-14; 2 Peter 3:18)! In fact, you cannot truly be a disciple of Jesus Christ if you do not spend diligent time learning from Him!

**3) You must imitate Jesus.** True discipleship does not stop at gaining a knowledge of what Jesus teaches. Instead, true discipleship involves living in a way that puts those truths into practice – just as Jesus did Himself (Luke 6:46-49; James 1:22-25). You not only should put these teachings into practice in your life because they are true but also because Jesus’s example is perfect (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:21). Remember that you are not just to be one who is educated by Jesus but one who is to be like Jesus (Luke 6:40; 1 John 2:3-6)! For example, after Jesus served His disciples by washing their feet, He plainly indicated to them that they were expected to do the same (i.e. humble themselves to serve others) if they were truly His disciples (John 13:12-17). Both by looking to the examples of Jesus and approved examples of those who followed Jesus in the Scriptures, you can be molded in the image of Jesus (1 Corinthians 11:1;

Philippians 3:17). In fact, it is Jesus's expectation that you continue growing into maturity as a disciple with a stature measured by Christ's fullness (Ephesians 4:11-13; Romans 8:29)! As you strive to put Jesus's word into application, you must not consider any area of your life "off limits" to His training. While you will never perfectly walk in His footsteps (1 John 1:8-10), this is no excuse to pick and choose which areas you will follow Him in (James 2:10-11). In fact, you cannot truly be a disciple of Jesus Christ if you are not diligently committed to imitating Him!

**4) Embrace the cost of discipleship.** Jesus was the most polarizing Person to ever walk the earth. Both His life and His teachings have been scarcely accepted (Matthew 7:13-14) and He was/is hated by the world (John 3:19-21). Therefore, Jesus wants people to recognize the cost, commitment, and dedication that is involved in being His disciple (Luke 9:23-26; 9:57-62; 14:25-33; John 15:18-21). Clearly, nothing and no one (including your own life) can be more important to you than being a disciple of Jesus Christ and everything your discipleship entails. Matthew 4:18-20 provides a summary of what Jesus wants your discipleship to look like. First, Jesus invites people to follow Him as His disciples ("Follow me"). Second, following Jesus will result in being transformed from who you are to who God wants you to be ("and I will make you"). Third, Jesus will use your transformed and committed life in His service and mission ("fish for people"). The result of all this is true spiritual blessings (Mark 10:28-31)!

Being in Christ (a Christian) means that you are a disciple of Jesus Christ. But, as we have seen, this is not an empty title or merely a way of describing yourself. Instead, this means that you have chosen to follow Jesus and be trained by Him so that you can be useful in His service. Now, you must do your part in letting Jesus train you.

## Discipleship Questions

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

**Teaching:** What did you learn from this lesson?

**Rebuking:** What are some ways this lesson challenges you to live differently?

**Correcting:** How does this lesson help you make positive changes for Christ?

**Training & Equipping:** How can you apply this lesson to be trained and equipped in God's service?