

Blessed be the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Many people call themselves Christians today, but do we truly understand what *Jesus Himself* said about being His follower? Surprisingly, Jesus never commanded us to “go and make Christians.” Instead, He commanded us to make disciples.

1. Jesus Commanded Us to Make *Disciples*, Not Merely *Christians*

Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV)

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you...”

The Great Commission is not about creating church members, denominational followers, or people who simply profess faith verbally. It is about raising up disciples—people who follow, obey, imitate, and surrender to Jesus.

2. The Word “Christian” Was First Used in Antioch—Not by Jesus

Many people are surprised to learn that Jesus never used the word “Christian.” The term arose later:

Acts 11:26 (NKJV)

“...And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.”

The word “Christian” literally means “one belonging to Christ” or “a little Christ.”

But importantly: *they were called Christians because they were first disciples.*

In other words:

A Christian = a disciple.

Not everyone who claims Christ is automatically a disciple.

This distinction is vital.

3. What Is A Disciple? Jesus Gives The Requirements

Jesus gave very specific, uncompromising requirements for anyone who desires to follow Him.

(a) A Disciple Must Deny Himself

Luke 9:23 (ESV)

“If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.”

Self-denial is not optional; it is foundational.

(b) A Disciple Must Carry His Cross

Luke 14:27 (NIV)

“Whoever does not carry their cross and follow Me cannot be My disciple.”

If disciples = Christians, then logically:

Whoever does not carry his cross cannot be a Christian.

The cross symbolizes suffering, sacrifice, obedience, rejection by the world, and death to the sinful nature.

(c) A Disciple Must Love Jesus Above All Relationships

Luke 14:26 (ESV)

“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother... and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.”

“Hate” here is a Hebrew expression meaning to love less or to reject anything that competes with loyalty to God (cf. Matthew 10:37).

(d) A Disciple Must Forsake Everything

Luke 14:33 (ESV)

“So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be My disciple.”

Renouncing “all” does not always mean selling everything; it means surrendering every part of life—possessions, ambitions, desires, relationships—under the Lordship of Christ.

Thus we can say:

A Christian who has not surrendered everything is not yet a disciple, and therefore not yet a Christian in the biblical sense.

4. The Early Christians Understood This Standard

In the book of Acts, Christians were known for:

- radical obedience (Acts 2:42)
- sacrificial love (Acts 4:32–34)
- holiness and repentance (Acts 19:18–20)

- willingness to suffer (Acts 5:41)
- Spirit-filled lives (Acts 4:31)

They lived differently from the world because they were true disciples.

Modern Christianity often lacks this, but Jesus has not changed.

Hebrews 13:8 (NKJV)

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

His standards have *not changed*.

5. Are You Truly A Christian According To Scripture?

According to Jesus' definition—not culture's—ask yourself:

- Have I denied myself?
- Am I carrying my cross?

- Have I turned from sin (drunkenness, fornication, immodesty, deception)?
- Have I surrendered everything to Jesus?
- Do I obey His teachings, not just believe in His existence?

If not, then according to Scripture, you are not yet a Christian—regardless of baptism, denomination, or church involvement.

1 John 2:4 (ESV)

“Whoever says ‘I know Him’ but does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

Faith without obedience is dead.

6. The Eternal Consequence Of Following Or Rejecting Christ

Jesus asks a sobering question:

Mark 8:36 (NKJV)

“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?”

What good is it to gain acceptance from society, to live in pleasure, or to appear modern—yet miss heaven?

The world's approval cannot save.
Only discipleship can.

7. The Call Of Jesus Today

Jesus is calling you today:

- Deny yourself.
- Turn from sin.
- Take up your cross.
- Follow Him wholeheartedly.

Let the world think you are strange; let Christ find you faithful.

Maranatha—Come, Lord Jesus!

May the Lord open our hearts and eyes to understand and embrace true discipleship.

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