

Flipping through religious broadcasting, visiting various churches, and talking with people about Christianity leaves one with a convoluted understanding about what it means to be a Christian. In fact, there are so many different ideas about what it means to be a Christian that we need a clear definition. We choose to use the Bible as our definition of a Christian.

So what is a Christian according to the Bible?

"So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch." Acts 11:26 (NIV)

1. A CHRISTIAN IS ONE WHO BELIEVES THAT JESUS CHRIST ALONE CAN FORGIVE SINS

Because Jesus Christ claimed that no one could approach the Father except through Him, Christians must believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation.

- Accepts the fact that only in the name of Jesus Christ can salvation be granted.

Jesus said to him. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." John 14:6 (NAS)

And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name

under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.

Acts 4:12 (NAS)

2. A CHRISTIAN IS ONE WHO HAS ACCEPTED THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

- Accepts the fact that man is separated from God because of sin and cannot know, love or please God on any level:

But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear. Isaiah 59:2 (NIV)

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 1 John 1:8 (NIV)

- Accepts the fact that the penalty for sinful action is spiritual death and the judgment of God, resulting in an eternity without God in hell:
For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23 (NIV)
- Accepts the fact that repenting to God, in grief and sorrow for having sinned against Him by not giving Him glory and offending Him by disobeying His commands, is necessary to obtain salvation:
... yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because

your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

2 Corinthians 7:9-10 (NIV)

- Accepts the fact that exercising faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as to his ability to forgive sin, is necessary to obtain salvation. Because the death of Jesus Christ paid the penalty for sin, and that His resurrection from the dead guaranteed God's acceptance of His payment, Jesus Christ is the object of the faith of the Christian:

But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart", that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord", and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. Romans 10:8-10

3. A CHRISTIAN IS ONE WHO HAS RECEIVED A NEW SPIRIT AND NATURE AS A RESULT OF BELIEF AND TRUST IN JESUS CHRIST

- *Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.* Psalm 51:10 (NIV)
- *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*
2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

4. A CHRISTIAN IS A FOLLOWER OR DISCIPLE OF JESUS CHRIST

As a follower of Jesus Christ, a Christian accepts the authority and Lordship of Jesus Christ over their life, is obedient to the commands of Christ and accepts all that He taught.

- Accepts the call of Jesus Christ, just as He called His 12 disciples to "...follow Me...", the believer is called by Jesus Christ to follow Him also:
Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."
Matthew 16:24-25 (NAS)
- Accepts the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son

and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)

5. A CHRISTIAN IS ONE WHO KNOWS THAT THEY BELONG TO JESUS CHRIST AND WILL GO TO HEAVEN TO BE WITH HIM WHEN THEY DIE

- *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
Romans 8:38-39
- *These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.*
1 John 5:13

In short, a Christian isn't defined by church affiliation, religious practice, or national allegiance. Rather, a Christian is one who has given his/her past, present, and future to Jesus Christ and strives to live in a relationship with Him. Have you accepted Jesus as your Savior? If not, why not?

What In The World Is A Christian?



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