

Just Christians

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Introduction: Is it Possible to be *Just* a Christian?

- A. “What kind of Christian are you anyway?”
 - 1. With thousands of denominations or religious groups in the world all claiming to be “Christians” it’s no wonder why people ask this question!
- B. Where do your loyalties lie?
 - 1. It’s not enough for many people for you to say: “I’m just a Christian” for people want to know where your loyalties lie (e.g. man, denom., group)
- C. It takes courage to be *just* a Christian.
 - 1. It means going against the world (**Jn 15:18-19**), conflict in relationships (**Lk. 6:22; Jn. 16:2**), and perhaps with your own family (**Mat. 10:34-37**).
 - 2. To be just a Christian, decide who it is you want to please (**Gal. 1:10**).
- D. There is no higher calling than to be just a Christian! (**Mat. 16:24-27**).
 - 1. To be a “Christian” the way the world defines Christian is no big deal.
 - 2. Yet, to be a Christian the way Christ defines it, now that’s the *real* deal!
 - 3. Seek to be nothing more and nothing less than just a Christian!

I. “The Disciples Were First Called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11:26).

- A. “Called Christians” by God.
 - 1. Before they were called disciples. A disciple is a learner, pupil, a follower of one’s teaching.
 - 2. They weren’t called Christians by just anyone; they were “*called*” (CHREMATIZO) Christians *by God* (*revealed* divine utterance **cf. Lk 2:26**).
 - 3. No one can claim the name Christian unless God regards him as one!
- B. Why were the disciples called Christians?
 - 1. Because the disciples were not disciples of just anyone! (**cf. John 9:28; Mat. 22:16; 9:14**).
 - 2. The name Christian set the disciples apart, identifying them as being the followers of the Christ, the Son of the living God! (**John 6:66-69**).
 - 3. To be a disciple of Christ (Christian) is a much higher calling than to be a disciple of any other person in this world! (**Luke 9:23; 14:27**).

II. Just Christians, Nothing More, Nothing Less.

- A. We can be just Christians by following the Bible only.
 - 1. What do you get when a person follows the Bible and a creed of man? (e.g., Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist, disciple of popular author, etc.).
 - 2. What do you get when a person follows the Bible and the Bible *alone* for his beliefs and practices? – *Just a Christian!* (**2 Tim. 3:16-17**).
- B. We can be just Christians by our commitment to imitate Christ.
 - 1. Christians are called to “follow in the footsteps of Jesus”, to think, speak, and act like Christ! (**1 Pet. 2:21-24; cf. Gal. 2:20**).
 - 2. Making claim to the name Christian ought to mean something! - That we are *like Christ* in the lives that we live (**1 John 2:5-6; cf. 2 Cor. 13:5**).
 - 3. Leaders in religious cults or other controlling, abusive groups expect to be imitated, even when their behavior is not Christ-like! (**1 Cor. 11:1**).

4. If you want to be *just* a Christian, don't depend on any man to show you what that means, read the Scriptures to find out "*What Would Jesus Do.*"

C. We can be just Christians by refusing to be glorified by men.

1. Being just Christians ought to be enough for us, yet for many there is a desire to be glorified by men and receive titles of recognition (**Mt. 23:5-7**).
2. Equality and humility is seen by referring to one another as simply Christians or brothers and sisters in Christ, no more, no less (**Mt. 23:8-10**).
3. All we should ever want is the chance to glorify Christ, not ourselves, in the lives we live for the Lord (**Gal. 6:14; cf. 1 Cor. 1:29-31**).

D. We can be just Christians by being non-denominational, refusing to be the followers of men or wear the names of men.

1. To be Christians *only*, we must guard our hearts from elevating men above Christ and in effect becoming their disciples (**1 Cor. 1:10-15**).
2. Belong to the church which Jesus built and bought with His blood, not to a church of man or denomination (**Mat. 16:18; Acts 20:28**).

III. Becoming Just a Christian.

A. By listening to the gospel, you can know how to become just a Christian!

1. Consider how Paul "almost persuaded" King Agrippa to become a Christian by speaking the truth to him (**Acts 26:27-29**).
2. Only through the hearing of God's word can a person come to know how to become a Christian (**Rom. 10:17; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38**).

B. Persuaded to become *just* a Christian.

1. Agrippa did not say: "You almost persuade me to become a disciple of Paul" or "You almost persuade me to become a member of your church."
2. First and foremost, the gospel persuades men and women to become *simply Christians*, disciples of Jesus Christ.
3. Such people are then added to *The Church of Christ* (**Acts 2:38-41, 47**).

IV. How Do I Remain Just a Christian?

A. Never be ashamed to be just a Christian.

1. It truly is a radical thing to just say that you are a Christian, pure and simple without giving into denominational thinking or way of speaking.
2. Remember always that the goal is to glorify God in the name Christian, no matter what the cost or suffering involved (**1 Pet. 4:16**).

B. There will be many religious groups that will try to persuade you to join them.

1. Today, it is taught to attend "the church of your choice" according to your preferences; that any church will do as long as you attend somewhere.
2. Don't just make a good choice, make the *best* choice possible; seek a church that stands for the truth of God's word (**1 Tim. 3:15**).

C. To remain *just* a Christian, insist on belonging to a local church that is *just* a church of Christ (**Rom. 16:16**).

1. A church that is truly non-denominational, that is *just* a church of Christ will practice N.T. Christianity, *nothing more and nothing less* (**Acts 2:42**).
2. Belong to a church that respects the authority of Christ (**Eph. 1:20-23; Mat. 28:18; cf. Col. 3:17; John 12:48**).

Conclusion: Can You Be Just a Christian Today? Yes You Can!