

A Disciple Is More Than a Follower

Many people call themselves *Jesus followers* today, but the Bible calls us to something deeper. Discover why being a true *disciple* of Jesus is more than just following along; it is about living as a committed *Christian* who knows, obeys, and reflects Christ.



Introduction

In much of the Western world, it has become common for Christians to refer to themselves as *Jesus followers* rather than using the word *Christian*. This has often been born out of a desire to avoid misunderstanding or negative connotations attached to the word *Christian*. While the intent is usually to be more approachable, we must ask, “Does the phrase *Jesus follower* really communicate who we are meant to be?”

The Bible makes it clear that there is a difference between being a follower of Jesus and being a true disciple. Labels may not be the most important thing, but our identity in Christ matters. Today, we are going to look at what Scripture teaches about being a disciple, and why it is far more than simply following Jesus around.

Many Followed Jesus

Throughout the gospels, we see that many people followed Jesus. Large crowds gathered to hear His teaching, to witness miracles, and to seek healing.

For example, we read in Luke 5:1-3:

Luke 5:1-3

(1) One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. (2) He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. (3) He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

The crowd was so great that Jesus had to get into Simon Peter's boat and teach from the water. Later, in Matthew 14 and Luke 9, we read about the feeding of the five thousand. Another time, in Mark 5 and Luke 8, a woman reached through the crowd and touched the hem of His garment and was healed instantly.

Crowds were drawn to Jesus, but being in the crowd did not mean they were disciples. Jesus warned about this in Matthew 7:21-23, which says:



Matthew 7:21-23

(21) "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (22) Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' (23) Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

Why did Jesus say this? Because He did not know them. They may have been followers, but they were not true disciples.

It is easy to get caught up in the excitement of being part of the crowd; attending services, enjoying fellowship, or admiring the teachings of Jesus. But are we truly known by Him? Take time this week to ask yourself, *"Am I simply following from the crowd, or am I a disciple?"*

Share in the comments below: What helps you move from being a follower to being a true disciple of Jesus?

What Is a Disciple?

A disciple is not just a casual follower; a disciple is a committed learner and apprentice.

Luke 6:12-16 shows us that Jesus had many disciples. It reads:

Luke 6:12-16

(12) One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. (13) When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: (14) Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, (15) Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, (16) Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

From among them, He chose twelve to be apostles. Later in Luke 10, He sent out seventy disciples in pairs to prepare the way for His ministry.

A disciple learns from the master and then goes out to teach others, replicating what they have been taught. Discipleship is self-replicating. John the Baptist had disciples (Matthew 11, Luke 7), but true Christian discipleship points people to Jesus.

Being a disciple of Jesus means more than following along. It means surrendering your life to His teaching, obeying the will of God, and living in such a way that others can come to know Him through you.

Discipleship means being shaped by Jesus and then sharing Him with others, teaching them how to be more than a follower, but a disciple. This week, identify one person you can encourage in their faith. Maybe it's through prayer, a conversation, or inviting them to study Scripture with you.

Share in the comments below: Who has helped you grow as a disciple, and how can you pass that on to someone else?



Only Some Were Disciples

Not everyone who followed Jesus became His disciple. Some wanted to follow, but not at the cost of their comfort or priorities.

In Luke 9:57-62, we see examples of people who said they wanted to follow Jesus but had excuses. It reads:

Luke 9:57-62

(57) As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." (58) Jesus replied, "**Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.**" (59) He said to another man, "**Follow me.**" But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." (60) Jesus said to him, "**Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.**" (61) Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family." (62) Jesus replied, "**No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.**"

One wanted to bury his father, another wanted to say goodbye to family, and others were hesitant because of the cost. Jesus' response made it clear: discipleship requires total commitment.

Following Jesus may cost us relationships, jobs, or even our lives. True discipleship requires sacrifice, while casual followers walk away when things become difficult.

Consider what following Jesus has cost you, or may cost you. Are there areas of your life where comfort or fear is holding you back from fully committing as His disciple? Pray for strength to put Christ first, no matter the cost.

Share in the comments below: What is one sacrifice you've made—or are willing to make—to follow Jesus more fully?

Conclusion

Being a Christian is not about labels; it is about living as a true disciple of Jesus. A *Jesus follower* may be part of the crowd, but a disciple is someone who knows Christ, has accepted His salvation, and is living in obedience to God's will.

Disciples make Jesus their Lord, not just their teacher. They live out the mission God has given them, even when it costs something, and sometimes everything. The call of Scripture is clear: do not just be a follower—be a disciple.

This Week

Do not settle for being a casual follower in the crowd. Choose to live as a disciple: a committed, obedient, multiplying Christian who reflects Jesus in every part of life. This week, take one concrete step forward: study His Word daily, pray intentionally, and mentor someone in faith.

Share in the comments below: What step are you taking this week to grow as a disciple of Jesus?

