

ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN?

INTRODUCTION

According to the latest statistics, many people in the world still claim to be Christian. You meet Christians everywhere but what do they believe? What is a Christian and, more importantly, how do you know if you are one?

In Luke 9:23, Jesus gave us an answer: "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."

Jesus said that you can tell a Christian by three important actions:

1 | ARE YOU DENYING YOURSELF?

The Greek verb for "deny" is *aparneomai*, which means "to refuse to recognize or to ignore something". It is the attitude that says that something is more important than yourself and, therefore, you should give it more attention. Jesus says that He deserves more attention than you do. He says that, to come after Him, you have to acknowledge that His name is greater than yours. You have to deny yourself.

We live in a world that is increasingly self-absorbed. Some current terms we use are: self-esteem, self-love, self-doubt, self-hate, self-pity etc. All of those words have one thing in common: SELF.

Christianity is not about self; it is about Christ. It is not about us and our personal fulfillment; it is about Him. It is not about our fame and glory and honour. It is not about our doing good deeds to save ourselves, it is about our trusting in Him. So much so that we are to deny ourselves – not esteem ourselves, not love ourselves, not hate ourselves, but deny ourselves for Jesus' sake. We are to sacrifice our needs and wants for His. This is one way you can tell you are a Christian.

**IF ANYONE WISHES TO
COME AFTER ME, HE
MUST DENY HIMSELF,
AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS,
AND FOLLOW ME**

2 | ARE YOU TAKING UP YOUR CROSS?

Luke 9:23 goes on to say, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily ... " In the First Century, people were not just crucified, they were tortured beforehand. And one way they were tortured was by having them carry their own cross to the place of execution. After self-denial, Jesus takes it one step further.

Speaking metaphorically, He says that His followers must now put themselves to death.

What does this mean? Why such graphic language?

If you want to follow Jesus, you have to give up the right to run your own life. If you want to profess His name, you have to trust in Him daily; not weekly, not monthly, not once a year during the holidays. You must commit yourself to Him daily. It must be a thoughtful, consistent decision that you make no matter what the circumstances.

This is not about works, but about commitment. It is not about earning your way into heaven, but trusting in the one who earned it for you. It is about dying to your right to take any credit for salvation and giving all of the credit to Him. You must take up your cross.

3 | ARE YOU FOLLOWING JESUS?

Jesus finishes up Luke 9:23 this way, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me." In the Greek, the phrase "follow Me" could also be translated "continue to follow Me." A Christian will not only deny himself and take up his cross daily, but he will continue to do so for the rest of his life.

Since there were no radios or televisions in the ancient world, followers of a religious teacher would have to literally follow their leader. They would have to go where he went and do what he did. Jesus tells His audience that if they want to be His disciples, this is what they would have to do. They would have to stay close to Him at all times and follow Him.

CONCLUSION

At this point, you might be thinking, "Why would anyone want to be a Christian if those are the conditions?" "Is it worth it?" Jesus answers those questions in Luke 9:24–25,

"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?"

Jesus says that you should do all of this because it will save your life. You should deny yourself and take up your cross and follow Him, because it is the only way to keep from losing your soul.

Jesus is a Master worth following. He is a Ruler worth believing in. Search all the the world and you will never find another Saviour like this one. Search all the religions of the world and you will never find another Leader who was willing to die for His followers.

Muhammed never did that, neither did Buddha, neither did all of the gods of Hinduism.

Christianity is the only religion that can offer you this.

The question is: what will you do with it? Will you receive this wonderful gift of salvation? Will you follow Jesus Christ today? Will you become a Christian?

If you are a Christian, I pray that all of this would encourage you as you remember what God has done for you.

If you are not a Christian, I pray that it would call you to action. You do not have to lose your life. You do not have to gain the whole world and forfeit your soul. You can be saved today if you would trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour. He holds all authority, and He saves and satisfies believing sinners by His life, death, and resurrection.

If you would like to learn more about Christianity or anything else in this flyer, we would love to hear from you.

GRACE
FELLOWSHIP CHILLIWACK