

**“Brand Recognition”**  
**Christian: It’s Not What You Think, Part 1**  
October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017

If you asked, “What’s a “Christian”? You would get **MANY** different answers

The good news & the bad news is everything you thought about Christianity or being a Christian is probably **WRONG**

The term “Christian” only appears **3** times in the Bible and is not defined

The term “Christian” was actually a **DEROGATORY** term used by those outside the Jesus community

Early Christians were called followers of the “**WAY**” – (see Acts 9:1-2)

Acts 11:25-26 (NIV) “Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.”

*“But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the emperor, and the propitiations[to appease] of the gods, did not banish the sinister belief that the conflagration [large destructive fire] was the result of an order. Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called “Chrestians” by the populace.”*

Tacitus (Roman senator & historian of the Roman Empire, 55-120 AD), in “Annals, 15.44”

Christ isn’t Jesus’ **LAST NAME** – it’s a title, the Hebrew word for Messiah translated into Greek, “Christ”

*“Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate,…”* Cornelius Tacitus

These were **OUTSIDERS** looking at this movement, trying to come up with a name for it, and they called these people Christians. But Christians didn’t call themselves **CHRISTIANS**.

“Christian” and “Christianity” are not **DEFINED** in the New Testament

Acts 26:28 (NIV) “Then Agrippa said to Paul, ‘Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?’”

1 Peter 4:16 (NIV) “However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.”

The term the New Testament uses to describe those part of the Jesus movement is “**DISCIPLE**”

Acts 11:26 (NIV) “The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.”

“**DISCIPLE**” means a learner, a pupil, an apprentice, an adherent, or follower

It was obvious to the people of Antioch that this group was **OUTRAGEOUSLY** devoted to a Jew known as Christ

A disciple would say to the one they are following, “Give me direction, show me how to live my life. And the answer – before you even give me the answer, I want you to know the answer is **YES**. Now what is it you think I should do?”

Acts 6:7 (NIV) “So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly,…”

Acts 9:26 (NIV) “When he [Paul] came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple.”

Acts 9:36 (NIV) “In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor.”

A terrifying & disturbing question: Are you a **DISCIPLE**? Or are you just a **CHRISTIAN**?

If we had just gotten this one teaching of Jesus right, our world, and our nation especially, would be a different and **BETTER** place

John 13:33-34 (NIV) “[Jesus said] My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for Me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come. A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

Jesus said to His disciples I want your relationship with each other to be characterized by how you love **EACH OTHER**

John 13:35 (NIV) “By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.”

John 13:36 (NIV) “Simon Peter asked him, ‘Lord, where are You going?’”

**As we close, would you...:**

1. Decide to be a “**DISCIPLE**” of Jesus and not just a “**CHRISTIAN**”
2. Be a **RIDICULOUS** lover of people, **ESPECIALLY** of fellow followers of Christ
3. “Rebrand the brand” by moving from what we believe, what we do on Sunday morning to how we **TREAT** each other
4. If you’ve seen or experienced Christians as being narrow-minded, homophobic, political, judgmental, while I don’t blame you for rejecting Christianity, I hope you won’t miss **JESUS**

Jesus our Savior put us all on **COMMON** ground and addresses the thing we all have in common:

What do we do about our **SIN**?

John 10:10 (GN) “[Jesus said] ... I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness.”

***My Next Step Today Is:***

- This week I will be a ridiculous lover of people, especially of fellow followers of Christ
- While I have been put off by “Christianity,” I am willing to be open to Jesus
- I am interested in joining a small group for this message series, beginning this week

**Next week:** Join us as we continue this series as we look at “Quitters.” Invite a friend!

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