

# When You're Not a Follower of Jesus

One thing that's concerning me these days is the expression by Christians that they are "a follower of Jesus". The statement is made because of the need to be PC – i.e. they don't want to offend anyone by saying they're "a Christian".

What it really means is that they are Bible-believing Christians who live their lives according to the scriptures in the NT. They do this primarily by trying to implement the teachings of Jesus as they are recorded in the Gospels.

The upshot of this type of focus on the Gospels is the development of 2 incorrect lifestyles. Having been in both these camps, I can easily identify them:

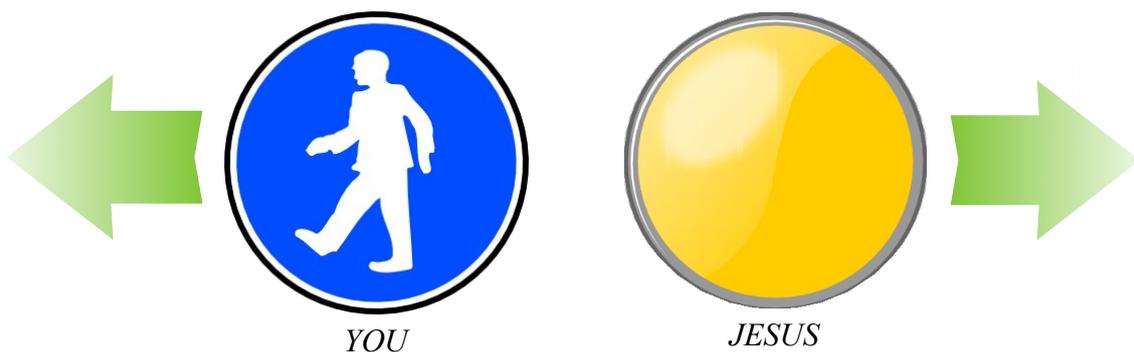
1. Following Jesus' teaching – Jesus told his disciples to teach their converts to obey his teachings.<sup>1</sup> This produces a person who is gentle, meek and mild, who looks after the disadvantaged in society.
2. Following Jesus' life style – This produces a person who sells or gives up everything they own and lives a pauper's life.

Is this what Jesus wants us to do?

It would appear so if we focus on the Gospels, but an in-depth study of the NT epistles shows that there was more to being a disciple of Jesus. A reasonable portion of the writings of the Apostles (Jesus' original followers) was about who we have become because of what Jesus did and how we are to operate now that we have the same Holy Spirit that Jesus had. Pentecostals and Charismatics have picked up on the latter, while the full implementation of the former has only just become a focus in these times.

We are currently being taught by our King who we really are and how to live in the reality of that. This is our destiny, not mimicking Jesus of Nazareth's life and teaching. His main target for our learning has been our identity as sons of the Most High God. With this understanding has come the imperative to align ourselves with him and his plans so our partnership can bring about the expansion of the Kingdom on Earth. He's also leading us into oneness with him through our intimate relationship with him.

So, if a person calls themselves a "follower of Jesus" while they are going in a different direction to Jesus then they're not following him at all.



King Jesus is looking for those who will align themselves with him in every way. This is what he wants.

Books like "Just Like Jesus"<sup>2</sup> stifle our alignment with the King because they cause readers to look backwards at what Jesus did and what he has said. Like the Bible, these books teach us about Jesus, with nothing personal included.

We need to look forward to what he's doing now and where he's taking us. What he wants is to deepen our knowledge of him through personal experience. This is not 'head knowledge', it's experiential knowledge of the personal, intimate kind.

1 – Matthew 28:20

2 – By Max Lucardo

Paul writes about this intimate knowledge:

*“Yes, furthermore, I count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege (the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth, and supreme advantage) of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord and of **progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him** [of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly]. For His sake I have lost everything and consider it all to be mere rubbish (refuse, dregs), in order that I may win (gain) Christ (the Anointed One)”<sup>3</sup>*

And in the Passion Translation:

*“To truly know him meant letting go of everything from my past and throwing all my boasting on the garbage heap. It’s all like a pile of manure to me now, so that I may be enriched in **the reality of knowing Jesus Christ** and embrace him as Lord in all of his greatness.”<sup>4</sup>*

To follow Jesus as he wants us to do it requires us to enter into a personal relationship with him rather than to do and say what he did in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. You can see that Paul had this relationship – he knew Jesus, he didn’t know about him.

This intimate knowledge is what Jesus referred to in his parable of the virgins: “I do not know you”. ‘Know’ here is the Greek word *eido* which means ‘full knowledge’<sup>5</sup> not ‘knowing about’.

You can tell if a person has a personal relationship with Jesus and is focused on his kingdom by what they talk about. By that I mean, what they say unsolicited, without any prompting. Check what they like talking about, what their main topic is when they start a casual conversation with you. Is it sport, climate change, the trouble with society, politics, cars or travel? When a couple of kingdom citizens get together their conversation should naturally be what the King is teaching them, their Kingdom assessments, and any revelations they've received.

**“Followers of Jesus” who don’t really know him should call themselves as a “follower of the teachings of Jesus”.** This is because they are just like Buddhists who follow the teachings of Buddha and Müşîmş who follow the teachings of Mohammed.

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3 – Philippians 3:8 Amplified Bible, Classic Edition (AMPC)

4 – Philippians 3:8 The Passion Translation

5 – The same as *yâda* in Hebrew (See Genesis 38:26)