

## Are you REALLY a disciple of Jesus - a "Christian," as Jesus defines it?

A disciple ("learner" or "follower") of Jesus won't always be able to say "yes" to all of the questions below. But a genuine disciple will desire to, and will keep on striving to make the necessary changes in his life. It will be his lifelong goal and desire. (The fakes won't be too concerned - at least not concerned enough to become willing to do something about their condition.)

This study is based mainly on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5 - 7). Several people (teens and adults) met together, studied this passage, and tried to write down questions for self examination, based on what Jesus says in this passage. (Additional comments have been added, for clarification.) Examine the verses that are associated with these questions. You may be able to write better questions (and you are encouraged to do so), but nobody can improve the Bible verses, themselves!

For many of these questions, it would be good to ask one additional question: "How do my actions (lifestyle) support my answer?" It's easy to say "yes," but one's actions need to back-up one's answer.

If you discover that you are not a disciple of Jesus - at least you know it now. You can decide if you want to become one, or if - whether by deliberate choice or by passively ignoring the issue - you'd rather stay the way you are.

Note that Matthew 5:3-16 focuses more on the character of a disciple; the rest of the Sermon on the Mount focuses more on the lifestyle of a disciple. However, these two concepts are interrelated, and we cannot completely separate them.	
Matthew 5:1-2	Are you willing to pay attention to Jesus' teaching? [This will be demonstrated by your willingness (or unwillingness) to accept what Jesus says in the following verses.]
Matthew 5:3	Do you have an ongoing awareness of your spiritual poverty?
Matthew 5:4	Do have an ongoing sorrow over your spiritual condition (or your lack of perfection)?
Matthew 5:5	Is your lifestyle characterized by a gentle and humble attitude? Do you recognize your need to have such an attitude?
Matthew 5:6	Do you crave a morally upright life, similar to the way a starving person might crave food?
Matthew 5:7	Is your life characterized by kindness and mercy for those who don't deserve it?
Matthew 5:8	Is your life characterized by moral purity?
Matthew 5:9	Do you go about trying to repair or prevent broken relationships?
Matthew 5:10-12	Is your loyalty to Jesus so great, that those who oppose God's ways oppose you? [Before you can say "yes" to this question, your answer to the previous questions must be "yes." Otherwise you have no loyalty to evaluate, and their opposition is due to some other reason.]
Matthew 5:13	Are you actively involved in the lives of others - encouraging righteousness and restraining sin?
Matthew 5:14-16	Do people see in your life the kind of deeds that reflect the nature and character of God?
Matthew 5:17-20	Do you "practice what you preach," and you do preach everything that God's Word says? [This would include all that God commands (taken within context), as well as the true significance of the moral law - as explained in the verses that follow. This passage is not restricted to those who are in an "official" teaching position, who might teach these things in a well-planned, orderly manner. It includes the types of things you might say during your normal day-to-day interaction with others.]
Matthew 5:21-22	Do you consider anger and contempt to be in the same category as murder, and therefore a serious sin to be avoided ? [The anger mentioned here is the type that people normally tend to have. It does not refer to anger over sin, such as in Mark 3:5. Also, Scripture - both Old and New Testaments - makes a distinction between "murder" and "the sword" of justice (Romans 13:4-5; Genesis 9:5-6; Leviticus 24:17, etc..)]
Matthew 5:23-26	Are you willing to deal with wrongs you've committed - and do you make sure that they have been dealt with before you do your religious activities?

Matthew 5:23-26	Do you consider reconciliation more important than religion?
Matthew 5:27-30	Do you consider thinking about sexual sin (desiring to commit the sin, or simply enjoying the thoughts about it) to be just as serious as the act itself? If such thoughts occur, are you willing to do whatever is necessary, to stop them (to replace them with righteous thoughts)? [A comment about the word "serious": There are some differences in consequences, as far as our interaction with other people may be concerned. However, either sin is sufficient to destroy our relationship with God; either can prevent us from being a disciple of Jesus. Both leave us with a morally corrupt heart.]
Matthew 5:31-32	Do consider the breaking of a marriage promise to be as serious as adultery itself? Do you reject the use of divorce as a means of getting around the prohibition of adultery? [See v. 27-30 for a comment about the word "serious."]
Matthew 5:33-37	Are you considered so trustworthy, that people can believe what you say, and have no reason to question it?
Matthew 5:38-42	When people wrong you, do you show kindness to them, rather than desiring to "get even"?
Matthew 5:43-48	Do you treat everybody as a friend, even though they might not treat you that way?
Matthew 5:43-48	Are you kind to those who aren't - to those who don't pay you back with kindness? Do you pray for them?
Matthew 5:48	Do you actively pursue perfection, as a lifelong goal? Do you consider it a requirement, rather than just a "nice idea"?
Matthew 6:1	Do you avoid trying to get people's attention, when you do good things? (Do you do good things? This verse assumes that you do.)
Matthew 6:2-4	Do you avoid trying to get people's attention, when you help the needy? [Note that it does not read, "if," but "when" you help the needy. Do you help the needy? (This assumes that they are truly needy, and not mere freeloaders - 2 Thessalonians 3:10.)]
Matthew 6:5-6	Do you avoid trying to impress people by your prayers?
Matthew 6:7-8	Do you avoid meaningless repetition in your prayers?
[Matthew 6:7-13]	Is the Lord's prayer an expression of your heart, rather than mere empty repetition? Does it reflect your normal communication with God?
Matthew 6:9	Are you honoring God?
Matthew 6:10	Are you willing to let God's will take place in your life, rather than your own will?
Matthew 6:11	Are you gratefully accepting what God gives you each day?
Matthew 6:12, 14-15	Have you forgiven those who have sinned against you, in the way that you want God to forgive your sins against him?
Matthew 6:13	Are you continually praying for help against temptation, before it occurs? [If this prayer is your desire, you will be less likely to walk into temptation! You won't willfully choose it.]
Matthew 6:16-18	Are your religious activities done for God's glory, rather than for people's praise?
Matthew 6:19-21	Do you value God's kingdom more than anything you possess?
Matthew 6:22-23	Do you focus more on what God values, than on what the world values?
Matthew 6:24	When you have the opportunity to choose what you want to do, do you choose to serve God? Does God's kingdom influence the way you use your "free time"?
Matthew 6:25-32	Do you trust God to take care of your needs, so that you don't have to worry about what you're going to eat, drink, or wear? [OR: ...so that you don't make them a major part of your focus?]
Matthew 6:33	Is God's kingdom more important to you, than food or clothes?

Matthew 6:34	Do you let tomorrow worry about itself?
Matthew 7:1, 3-5	Do you deal with your own sins, before you point out the sins of others? [Note: There are passages, such as 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, which show that judging others is sometimes a legitimate obligation. However, judging one's self must come first. Only then will you see clearly, to deal with someone else's sins - Matthew 7:5b. (Also, if you have an awareness of your own failures, you will be less inclined to have an attitude of superiority over others who haven't yet dealt with their sins.)]
Matthew 7:2	Are you aware that God's standards apply to you, as much as they apply to other people? Do you apply them to yourself, as much as you would like to apply them to other people?
[Matthew 7:1-5]	Do you proclaim God's judgments, rather than inventing your own and trying to force your own opinions on others? [Mark 7:6-8 illustrates what God says about those who replace God's requirements with their own.]
Matthew 7:6	Do you avoid forcing the truth on those who have stubbornly rejected it? [This doesn't mean that you shouldn't try to reflect the truth, or to restrain sin. But some of the teachings of God's kingdom will not be appreciated by those who have already rejected the kingdom. For such people, you are wasting your time, when you try to tell them.]
Matthew 7:7-11	Are you looking for what God has for you?
Matthew 7:7-11	Do you trust God to provide everything good that you need? (The focus is on what you "need," not on what you "want.")
Matthew 7:12	Are you willing to follow God's example, and do good to others?
Matthew 7:13-14	Are you willing to take the narrow way of Jesus' teachings, rather than the broad way of other teachings? (This will be shown by the way you respond to the previous verses.)
Matthew 7:13-23	Are you willing to accept Jesus' teachings as your teachings?
Matthew 7:13-23	Are you willing to accept Jesus lifestyle as your lifestyle?
Matthew 7:21-23	Do you obey and serve God, rather than just talking about doing so?
Matthew 7:21-23	Are you willing to let others judge you by your fruit, or absence thereof?
Matthew 7:24-27	Do you pay attention to Jesus, and do what he says?
Matthew 7:28-29	Do you accept Jesus' authority on these matters? [See the previous verses.]

There are many other passages which teach what it means to be a disciple. Two of them are given below. You are encouraged to look for other passages, and to write your own questions.

Matthew 9:35-10:1	Do you care enough about people, that you are willing to tell them about God's good news, and to help them in their needs?
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Matthew 10:32-33	Do you acknowledge Jesus in the presence of other people? (... when they are against Jesus?)
Matthew 10:34-36	Do people (including family members) who are opposed to God's kingdom, also oppose you? [You do not have to try to make them oppose you! If you are willing to be like Jesus, it will happen, even though you try to do nothing that will give them a legitimate cause for opposition. Compare to John 15:25.]
Matthew 10:37-9	Do you love Jesus more than you love your family or your own self?
Matthew 10:37-9	Are you willing to associate with the cross? (... NOT as a piece of jewelry, but in the sense of self-denial, and a willingness to follow Jesus' example.)