

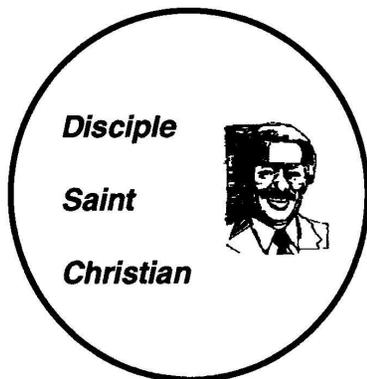
everything that has religious or moral connections. A Christian is a “disciple” (learner, follower) of Christ (Acts 11:26). Disciples are also called “saints” (Acts 9:1,13), meaning one “separated from sin and consecrated to God.” Since Saul’s persecution of the disciples is also termed doing evil to “the church” (Acts 8:3), Christians are members of the Lord’s church (1 Corinthians 12:27), the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23). “Christian” is the proper name for members of the church of Christ; “disciple” describes their relationship to the Master; and “saint” relates them to sin and to God.

Thus, a Christian bears certain spiritual relationships that other people do not. To the body of Christ, he is a “member,” i.e., a part of the body (1 Corinthians 12:12,27). Since Christ has only one body (1 Corinthians 12:20), this is a distinguished privilege. To the family of God, he is a child (Ephesians 3:14-15; Galatians 3:26). Since God has no children outside His family, this is a great honor. In relationship to the kingdom of God, the Christian is a citizen (Ephesians 2:19; Colossians 1:13). There are only two kingdoms in the spiritual realm, one of Satan and one of God, and all are citizens of one or the other. The Christian is also a living stone in God’s temple (Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:5). This is the only realm where God will accept our worship and service.

Christians are not to be called by human religious names. The name “Christian” is of divine origin, being used for the first time ever in Antioch (Acts 11:26). The word for being called by a name in New Testament Greek is usually “*kaleo*” (139 such New Testament uses) or “*lego*” (36 such occurrences). But here the word is the much less used verb “*chrematizo*.” The primary meaning of this word is “of God impart a revelation or injunction or warning (of oracles...” (Arndt & Gingrich. 893). The only other time in the New Testament it is used of calling people by a

## What Is A Christian?

### Body of Christ



### Church Of Christ

name, it obviously means because God has so designated them (Romans 7:3), and the remaining occurrences refer to divine revelations (Luke 2:26; Acts 10:22; Hebrews 8:5; 11:7; 12:25). The term “Christian” glorifies God (1 Peter 4:16) and honors the name of Christ, in whose name alone salvation can be found (Acts 4:9-12). Thus, Paul forbids us to wear sectarian names, as they demonstrate sectarian loyalty (1 Corinthians 1:10-13).

If you are not a Christian, you can become one simply by being saved by the Gospel (Romans 1:16). If you will hear the word of God (Romans 10:17), believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Romans 5:1-2), repent of your sins (Romans 2:5), confess your faith that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Romans 10:8-10), and be baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3-4), you will become a Christian.

A Christian is simply a disciple of Christ. If you are a Christian, strive always to live worthily of that noble name (Ephesians 4:1). If you are not a Christian, you need to become one, for only in Christ is salvation to be found (2 Timothy 2:10). Are you a Christian?

#### Works Cited

Arndt, W.F. & F.W. Gingrich, **A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.**

**Bible,**

unless otherwise noted, all Bible references and quotes are to the **New King James Version.**

**English Standard Version.**

#### Questions for Review

##### I. True/False

1. \_\_\_\_ All good, morally upright people are Christians.
2. \_\_\_\_ The members of the various denominations are Christians.
3. \_\_\_\_ Christ has only one body.
4. \_\_\_\_ Christians should not be identified religiously by sectarian names.

## II. Match each term to its definition.

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. _____ Dissensions | A. sects   |
| 2. _____ Heresies    | B. one separated from sin and consecrated to God |
| 3. _____ Christian   | C. learner, follower                             |
| 4. _____ Disciple    | D. divisions                                     |
| 5. _____ Saint       | E. designated by God                             |
| 6. _____ Member      | F. a follower of Christ                          |
| 7. _____ Called      | G. a part of the body                            |

## III. Match the following relationships of Christians.

- |                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. _____ body of Christ | A. child        |
| 2. _____ family of God  | B. living stone |
| 3. _____ kingdom of God | C. member       |
| 4. _____ temple of God  | D. citizen      |

## IV. Match the step to becoming a Christian with the supporting Scripture.

- |                         |                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. _____ Hear           | A. Romans 5:1-2   |
| 2. _____ Believe        | B. Romans 2:5     |
| 3. _____ Repent         | C. Romans 10:8-10 |
| 4. _____ Confess Christ | D. Romans 6:3-4   |
| 5. _____ Be Baptized    | E. Romans 10:17   |

## Bible Correspondence Course Lesson Fourteen What Is a Christian?

*Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. (Acts 11:25-26)*  
*Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian." (Acts 26:28)*  
*Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name (1 Peter 4:16, **ESV**)*

Our nation is often called a "Christian" nation, even though actual Christians comprise only a tiny minority of its population. In fact, the term "Christian" is so loosely used in common speech, I actually heard of a so-called "Christian basketball team," called the "Holy Bouncers." The New Testament usage of the word is far more restricted. Since we are to "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11), we should find how the New Testament uses the term "Christian." What is a Christian?

First, we need to know what is **not** a Christian. Contrary to popular opinion, not all good, morally pure people are Christians. One would be hard pressed to find a man of higher morals than Cornelius the centurion (Acts 10:1-2,22). But Peter had to tell him how to be saved (Acts 11:13-14), implying he needed salvation and was, thus, not a Christian. Furthermore, not all religious people are Christians. Cornelius was certainly religious (Acts 10:1-2,22), but he was not a Christian. Not even the godly characters of the Old Testament were Christians, because "the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). Nor are the members of the various denominations Christians. Their membership in these divisive bodies violates the Lord's prayer for unity (John 17:20-21) and is specifically condemned as a work of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21 ("Dissensions" means "divisions," and "heresies" means "sects").

What, then, is a Christian? The New Testament word "Christian" means "a follower of Christ." It is a noun, not an adjective, the name applied to certain individuals, not a description of anything and