

Marks Of A Real Christian

Introduction. You cannot pull a beautiful diamond out of a mine, nor can you dig a solid gold brick out of the ground. Perfection takes purifying. Precious metals are melted down and the dross is removed. A rough diamond must be cut and polished before its beauty can be seen.

Some do not react well when they learn the requirements of godly living because they think they are too hard. The rich young ruler walked away from Jesus because he thought the cost was too great (Matthew 19:16-22). Real Christians do not make a halfhearted commitment. Romans 6:16-17 describes us as "slaves." Galatians 2:20 says we must be "crucified with Christ." In Colossians 3:5, we have to "consider our members dead" to immorality.

Being a Christian is not a pastime; it is a passion. Instead of allowing it to affect our very inner being, some are content to wear it as a "veneer." Veneer is something pretty that covers up something unsightly. Do any of you here fit this description? If you do, you can be better. You know it, I know it, and certainly God knows it. Today, we are going to look at the marks of a real Christian. Are you one?

I. ***Real Christians Pray***

- A. They freely talk to their heavenly Father. Most of us only spend a few minutes a day if that much talking to God. Most relationships would die from a lack of communication if we neglected them that much.
- B. We should spend time and approach the throne of God (Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:25; Romans 8:26-28). Jesus and the apostle Paul said we ought to pray, that should settle it (Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Timothy 2:8).
- C. There is nothing that will help you draw nearer to God than prayer (James 4:8). There may be people here today who have Christians for years, but do not feel close to God. Let me suggest that you pray to Him.

II. ***Real Christians Are Involved***

- A. No visiting, staying at home, running around, nor any hypocritical brother or sister is big enough to keep the real Christian away from the assembly on the Lord's day and all the other assemblies (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 20:7).
- B. Have you ever heard the statement, "Nothing can survive in a vacuum?" No one can exist all alone. Christians are the same way. Consider the exhortations to closeness and fellowship in the New Testament (Hebrews 10:24; 1 John 1:7). I need you and you need me. Neglect leads to desertion. We need recharging and building up.

- C. Sometimes we have the attitude that we can just come in here, pick up our songbooks and sing, "I'm coming home to glory" without doing anything else. But that is a joke, plain and simple. God expects us to pull our weight as members of the body (Ephesians 4:11-16). Much more work gets done when everyone contributes!
- D. It is very encouraging and the work is built up in so many ways when you see Christians struggle to become better servants of God. For example, a man who struggles to give an invitation for the first time or a woman who struggles to teach a Bible class is not only a help to the work, but is also an encouragement to everyone else in a congregation.

III. ***Real Christians Give As They Have Been Prospered***

- A. Some congregations need so much preaching on this subject (1 Corinthians 16:1-2), but the Bible has taught it all the time (2 Corinthians 8:7).
- B. We live by a universal law of life: whatever we sow, that shall we reap (2 Corinthians 9:6-11). In general, America promotes a lifestyle that convinces Christians to hold on to everything they get. But we know better (2 Corinthians 8:12-15). We have brethren who need compassion and we show it by helping them with the physical needs of this life (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35).
- C. It is good to preach and study about giving because it is a direct "thermometer" of our spirituality. How we decide to spend our money tells God how high on the priority list we put Him (Matthew 6:33).

IV. ***Real Christians Are Diligent Bible Students***

- A. We should spend much time in reading and studying (2 Timothy 2:15; John 5:39; Romans 15:4). You will discover countless numbers of people who are afraid of the Bible simply because they have no knowledge of it (Hosea 4:6, 17; Hebrews 5:11-14).
- B. We must contend for the truth not for our opinions. Truth is not based on subjectivity, it is based on objectivity. Paul refers to it as "sound doctrine" (1 Timothy 1:10; 2 Timothy 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1), "sound in the faith" (Titus 1:13; 2:2), and "sound words" (2 Timothy 1:13; Titus 2:8). Too many are fed spiritual junk food in the pulpit!
- C. A careful and diligent student is protected against the whims of the religious world because they have a firm foundation (Ephesians 4:14). This is different than being close-minded and prejudice to new teaching. This is a careful evaluation of spiritual teaching. A real Christian believes the way they do because they can prove it!

V. ***Real Christians Live What They Teach***

- A. We are ambassadors of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20-21; Matthew 5:13-16; Romans 2:21; Titus 2:7-8). This means a representative which acts in behalf of someone else.
- B. I hope we will always live so that those who are not Christians can see Christ in us (Philippians 1:27; Colossians 1:27).
 - 1. We need to watch our words (Matthew 12:31-37; Ephesians 4:29; 5:4; James 3:8; Colossians 3:9).
 - 2. We need to watch how we dress (1 Timothy 2:9-10; 1 Peter 3:3-4).
 - 3. These are the two most visible signs that non-Christians see.
- C. Have you ever heard anyone say, "I had rather see a sermon than hear one?" We must "practice what we preach" (Titus 2:11-14). We are saved to save others. This means that we are going to look for a rich harvest (John 4:35; James 5:19-20; Jude 22-23). But a bad example can destroy our chances to convert our neighbors.

Conclusion. How do you measure? If you want to make an exact reproduction of something, you use a template. The Bible is our template. If our lives are held up to this "template" it should reflect this pattern just like the piece that is cut reflects the template. If your life does not show a pattern familiar to the Bible, you should turn and repent (Acts 3:19).