

Why Be A Christian

Introduction. There are probably lots of reasons why you have decided not to be a Christian. You may fear ridicule and persecution. You may have a nagging feeling that being a Christian means relinquishing the fun parts in your adolescence. You may have convinced yourself that you cannot live as a Christian. You may not be able to shake the feeling of eternally losing loved ones who did not become Christians.

A. W. Tozer wrote, "A real Christian is an odd number anyway. He feels supreme love for One whom he has never seen. Talks familiarly every day to Someone he cannot see. He expects to go to heaven on the virtue of Another, empties himself in order that he might be full, admits he is wrong so he can be declared right, and goes down in order to get up. He is strongest when he is weakest, richest when he is poorest, and happiest when he feels worst. He dies so he can live, forsakes in order to have, and gives away so he can keep. He sees the invisible, hears the inaudible, and knows that which passes knowledge." Jesus has always had more fans than followers, but you need to be a follower. In order for you to go to heaven, there are three reasons why you should be a faithful Christian.

I. ***To Wear The Grandest Name***

- A. In the context of a Messianic prophecy, Isaiah said concerning God's people, "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name" (Isaiah 62:2).
- B. The scriptures give four names to Christians -- saints, for their holiness; believers, for their faith; brethren, for their love; disciples, for their knowledge. However, it was the Lord who gave the name "Christian" (Acts 11:26).
 1. The word for "called" (*chrematizo*) can mean a designation given by God (Mark 3:14; Luke 6:14; Hebrews 5:10).
 2. It was made known by God (Luke 2:26; Hebrews 12:25). This was not a name of derision, but a divinely given name.
- C. We should be proud to be known as a follower of Christ. The disciples of Jesus should not call themselves by a man's name no matter how great. We should not call ourselves after a New Testament character (John the Baptist, Peter, or Paul), any saint, or religious leader (Martin Luther, John Calvin, or John Wesley).
- D. Some will argue that there is nothing in a name. But does it matter whether the right name is signed on your check, your name is in your will, or if your wife submits to wear your name? Since the name of Christ is above every name, then we should not be ashamed to wear the grandest name (Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 4:15-16)!

II. ***To Meet The Highest Challenge***

- A. Ambitious people love a great challenge, whether it be becoming a Navy Seal, winning a gold medal, climbing a mountain, or running a marathon. Life is measured by its depth, not its duration.
- B. The call of the gospel leads us to a higher, nobler, demanding, but more rewarding life. Holiness is the driving ambition of the Christian (Philippians 3:14).
 - 1. We have to be willing to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him (Matthew 16:24-26; Mark 8:34-37; Luke 9:23-25).
 - 2. We have to restrain our fleshly appetites, sacrifice our wills, and practice His precepts (Psalm 119:9-11; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Timothy 2:21).
- C. There are many saints who met the highest challenge of serving God (1 Samuel 17:49; Daniel 3:16-19, 28; 6:7, 22-24). They are a "cloud of witnesses" to which we can look for strength (Hebrews 12:1).
- D. It is the highest challenge, but it comes with a reward in this life (Proverbs 3:13, 18; 4:10, 20-22; 9:10-11; 10:16-17; 11:19; 13:3; 14:27; 19:23; 22:4). It also rewards us with eternal life (Mark 10:28-30; Hebrews 11:10, 16; Revelation 22:14). Life is the very childhood of our immortality. Run the race and finish your course by keeping your eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2-3).

III. ***To Have The Greatest Influence***

- A. You possess great power to influence, so use it (Micah 5:7; Matthew 5:13-16; Hebrews 11:4; 1 Peter 2:12). Godly people are to the human race what salt is to food -- the element that preserves it from destruction (Genesis 18:24-32).
- B. It has been said that a holy life will produce the deepest impression, but a crooked stick will have a crooked shadow. Lighthouses blow no horns; they only shine.
- C. The gospel changes lives. It can change a drunk into sobriety, the sexually immoral into purity, a blasphemer to a gospel preacher, and a murderer into a saint (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:12-17).
 - 1. It was David Otis Fuller who asked, "If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?"
 - 2. Because you are a Christian, you have more power to influence souls to eternal life than the President, a governor, or congressman. You can have more influence than the richest man, the greatest athlete, and the most acclaimed actor, as you share the unsearchable riches of Christ with others (Ephesians 3:7-8).
 - 3. Look at the spread of the gospel from just a few disciples to a multitude of people in a short period of time (Acts 2:41; 4:4;

14:1)! They had a love for Jesus and holy lives which impressed those who needed the message.

D. John Knox said, "When I think of those who have influenced my life the most, I think not of the great but of the good."

Conclusion. Why should you be a Christian and remain faithful to the Lord? To wear the grandest name, to meet the highest challenge, and to have the greatest influence! This would not be possible without the loving sacrifice of Jesus for your sins (Hebrews 2:9). Life asks no questions that faith cannot answer. To become a Christian and enter into the grace of God, you have the chance to obey the gospel today (Luke 6:46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Hebrews 5:8-9). It does not take much of a man to be a Christian, but it takes all of him.