

Be a follower of Jesus

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Full disclosure. I was raised in a small, rural, highly conservative church family in West Tennessee, along with my parents and grandparents.

As I've gotten older, I've acquired a greater appreciation for Friedrich Nietzsche, especially his astute observation of "that which does not kill us makes us stronger."

Anyway, over the years I have come to the stark realization there can be a huge difference between people who call themselves Christians and those who actually try to follow the teachings of Jesus.

For example:

Followers of Jesus understand the importance of context. People who call themselves Christians, on the other hand, often adopt a very rigid, legalistic perspective.

Followers of Jesus understand bad behavior is not necessarily indicative of a bad person. People who call themselves Christians, however, tend to equate the behavior with the person.

Followers of Jesus know they need to examine themselves first and foremost. But people who call themselves Christians love to point out the failings of others while ignoring their own shortcomings.

Followers of Jesus are nonjudgmental; you know, as commanded. People who call themselves Christians, however, can be first in line when it comes to throwing stones.

Followers of Jesus know final judgment is served for the Creator. People who call themselves Christians occasionally assume they get to play that role.

Followers of Jesus put more credence on His authority. People who call themselves Christians frequently give more weight to those who lived hundreds of years before He became flesh.

Followers of Jesus love their neighbors as themselves. People who call themselves Christians tend to make their love conditional.

Finally, followers of Jesus view sinners with compassion and empathy. People who call themselves Christians often view sinners with contempt.

So are you more a Christian or a follower of Jesus? Asking for a friend.

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