



# THE EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

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How do you describe yourself?—an engineer, a teacher, a contractor, a repairman, a gas company employee, a salesman, a homemaker?

You may describe yourself as a father, a mother, a grandparent. If you are a Christian how about describing yourself as, “I’m a Christian.”

What is the evidence of Christianity in your life? If you were taken to court and accused of being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?

We may put on the mantle of Christianity—talk the talk, dress the look, act the part. Some of us have Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes—coat and tie, a Sunday dress—clothes we don’t wear any other time.

I’ve heard people say that we should wear our very best for Jesus when we go to church. Two problems with that: One, what is the very best?

Two, honestly, I think Jesus is more interested in us living our lives for Him every day than in how we dress on Sunday morning. Here’s the problem: often when we take off our Sunday clothes, we also take off the mantle of Christianity until the next Sunday.

We don’t mind people seeing us come to church on Sunday. We’ve put on the mantle, the outward cloak of Christianity. What we need to be careful of is the belief that we’ve fulfilled our Christian duty by going to church.

Going to church is part of being a Christian. But there is so much more to being a Christian than just church.

Mark 3:31-35(NIV)

31Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. 32A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." 33"Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. 34Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 35Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

Jesus makes it very clear that the evidence of being a Christian is doing God's will. "Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

This is a word of warning from Jesus that even with so deep, precious, and basic a relationship as that of human family; it is superseded by the fellowship of the new family of God, which will continue into eternity.

And the evidence of being in the new family of God is the day to day to day to day living your life for Jesus. Isn't that what family is?

Here's what this means: everyday you are part of your family. You let your hair down, so to speak with family. They know the true you. Well, as Christians, others should know the true us.

## 1. A true follower of Jesus has spiritual vision

Mark 3:20-22(NIV)

20Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. 21When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind." 22And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebub! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons."

From the very beginning of his public ministry Jesus was under pressure. Everywhere He went crowds of people pressed around Him.

He had just gone through a very emotional time of choosing the twelve apostles (vv. 13-19). He was hungry, trying to eat but couldn't because of the press of the people (v. 20).

He was so involved, so caring and concerned for others, and so busy, that Mary, His mother, and his brothers became concerned for His health (v. 21). They came to take Him away.

They, as yet, do not have spiritual 20-20 vision. They believe it in His best interest to get Him away from the crowds for some rest. But they are blind to what's going on in His ministry.

They want to take Him away from His work—what He should be doing, what He needs to be doing, what He loves to be doing. Their love is blind to who He is and what His purpose is. They don't yet understand.

We do the same thing today. We know what we ought to be doing. But our love for the status quo; our love for what we were and who we are now, blinds us to present ministry and growth opportunities. A Christian should have 20-20 spiritual vision.

We should see where God is working, and join Him in that work. Real faithfulness has 20-20 vision. It looks back and says, "This is what we were." It looks forward and says, "This is what we can be."

20-20 vision takes off the blinders of status quo and apathy; it removes the blinders of cliquishness; it removes the blinders of selfishness and self-centeredness.

A real follower stops thinking only about his wants, his needs, his desires, and always considers what's best for the church and the kingdom.

With eyes wide open a faithful follower of Jesus realizes that our church is here to share the good news of Jesus. We want people to be saved and become a member of Jesus' family.

We understand that if these things are going to happen, it is up to each of us—it is up to me, it is up to you. We must see everyone as someone of worth whom Jesus loves.

## 2. A true follower is committed

Commitment goes beyond the walls of the church building.

When told that His mother and brothers were there, rather than being embarrassed, Jesus took the opportunity to teach a great lesson. He said, "Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and brother." (v.35)

"Whoever does God's will . . ." The real evidence of your Christianity is how well you are obeying Jesus Christ. How many of us have a real commitment to Jesus Christ that goes beyond your own special interest?

As conflict was escalating in Europe in the 1930s and early 40s many Jews were required to wear a yellow star of David on their clothing wherever they went as a visible badge that they were Jewish.

Some Christian leaders thought it would be good for Christians to wear some sort of badge on their clothing so that others would know that Christians opposed what was happening to the Jews.

This was rejected because the real badge, the real identification of Christianity is obedience to Jesus Christ. Real Christians would stand up for the Jews and in opposition to the evil empire.

You see, a true follower has a passion for the things Christ has a passion for.

This is what Jesus is saying in this verse. “Whoever does the will of God is My family,” He says. “Those who belong to Me, those who are truly born again—these are who are devoted to everything I am devoted to. They have a passion for what I have a passion for. They will do my will.”

Where and what is your passion today? Do you have passion for things Christian? Jesus said, “If you love Me you will obey me. If you love Me, you will take up your cross daily and follow Me.”

I love going to a cafeteria. At the salad bar, from among the dozen salads to choose from, I choose a carrot salad. From the many meats I choose pot roast or chicken fried chicken. Potatoes and gravy, green beans and sweet potatoes are added to my plate. Some of us treat our Christianity the same way.

We pick and choose what we want out of the Bible. Some verses are ours, but others are for others. The sermon on Sunday usually is for others, not you—“Amen, brother, preach it. Step on their toes.” You are a cafeteria Christian.

Cafeteria Christians can't seem to find what God's will is, even though it's right here in the Bible. Everything you need to know to live an obedient, constructive, Christian life.

### 3. A true follower of Jesus loves others

Already in Jesus' early ministry He was being condemned by the religious leaders. They wanted to destroy Him.

Mary and the boys heard those rumors, so they were on a rescue mission to save Him from imminent death.

When Jesus asks, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” (v.33), He wasn’t renouncing His mother and brothers. He loved them more than they even loved Him. His last request from the cross was for John to care for His mother.

It is out of love that the entire world is invited into Christ’s intimate and divine family (Jn. 3:16). This is the family Jesus talks about. Anyone can enter His spiritual family by trusting in Him.

Once you are in the family, the number one evidence of being a follower of Christ is love. “For God so loved…” now we so love the world. We love our fellow church members. They are your most immediate family.

We love other Christians in Albuquerque, no matter the denomination they belong to. We’re not in competition with anyone except Satan.

We love the Christians of the world because they are our brothers and sisters in Christ.

You must love your fellow Christians. You have no choice in the matter. Are you happy or unhappy when you are with fellow Christians? This is a good question to ask yourself.

But here’s the real bottom line: we also love the lost people in this world. We know that we were lost, and because of God’s love, Christ died for us. So, because of that love, we love the lost.

Every day people die and go into eternity without knowing Jesus Christ. Jesus has a passion for them to be saved. This is why you are here, this is why this church is here.

We are here to fulfill the Great Commission of reaching our world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It’s time to step up to the plate and be counted.

## Application:

The most important thing in life is your relationship with Jesus Christ. He wants you to be in His family. He loves you. He never quits or gives up on you. For the same reasons, how can you? What is the evidence in your life that you are in Christ’s family?

Remove those barriers you have set up. Stop making excuses not to serve Jesus.

“I know I should but I’m just so busy.” “I’ve already done my part. Now, let someone else do it.” “Sunday is my only day off.” “I used to have a ministry in the church, but no one ever said ‘thank-you’ so now I don’t care and I don’t do.”

Let me ask you what is the most important thing in your life? Think about it. If you are honest you must answer that it is Jesus Christ. He loves you—but what if He said He was too busy, or that He's done His part, now you are on your own.