

## Will the True Followers of Jesus Please Stand Up – Acts 9:19b-31

Would you say that you are a “religious” person? Or...

Would you say, that you are a “Christian”?

Is there a difference? And if so, what are the differences?

A Gallop poll found that 81% of Americans believe that religion is either “very important” or “fairly important” in their lives.

Therefore, 81% of Americans would consider themselves religious!

But what do they mean by it? “Religion” is very difficult to define!

Why? Because religion is man-made! It is a set of beliefs, behaviors & practices that relates humanity to the supernatural.

There are an estimated 10,000 distinct religions worldwide!  
Religion is relative, it represents no absolutes!

In a survey of over 327,000 American adults, Gallop found that 78% of Americans consider themselves Christian.

So... 78% of Americans call themselves Christians! A striking resemblance!

Are there really that many Christians out there... or has “Christianity” become synonymous with considering oneself “religious”?

Shouldn’t Christianity be defined by more than just American religion? Is it? How would you answer the question, “What makes you a Christian?”

Does it not mean more than just going to church, believing in Jesus, following Biblical principles and being a good person?

Read Matthew 7:21-23 - “Not everyone who says to me, “Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” - Jesus proclaimed these words!

The people who are willing to do the will of the Father, not just fill a seat in church, are the true followers of Jesus! But what is the will of the Father?

Saul was a very religious man – a man of great passion for God, great conviction in what he believed in, & great action in living it out!

The problem was that it was all misdirected, until God transformed him!

Saul’s religiosity, actually blinded him from the truth of Christianity! But what we see take place in Acts 9 reveals the difference between Saul, the religious man, and Saul/Paul, the true follower of Jesus (a Christian)!

Saul’s life and teaching, from this point forward, will come define for us what it truly means to be a follower of Jesus – to be a Christian!

If only the 78% would come to see these distinguishing marks of a true Christian!

## What are these marks by which a true follower of Jesus can be identified?

- To be a Christian, one must have a true conversion experience!

It may look different. It may feel different. *But has God done a good work of redemption in you? Has He changed you from the inside out?*

- To be a Christian requires repentance – a turning from self & a turning to Christ! Saul’s life did a complete 180! *Has yours?*

*Is repentance a part of our identity as a self-proclaimed Christian?*

- To be a Christian is to proclaim Jesus to be the “Son of God”! He is more than just a good man, a good teacher, a good example to follow!

Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, God in the flesh, and as such He demands our allegiance and obedience – He is Lord & Savior.

Saul became convinced of this! **Vs. 20 – “And immediately Saul proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, ‘He is the Son of God’”.**

- To be a Christian is to give evidence in your life of God’s redemptive work in this world! Both in word and deed!

**Vs. 22 – But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.”**

Saul confounded the Jews with His not so blind faith!

In word – He gave a readied defense of the truth of Jesus’ identity!

O.T. prophecies give irrefutable evidence!

In deed – Saul’s life had completely changed & it was evident to all!

These 4 marks distinguish between the “religious” & the true followers of Jesus!  
*If you claim to be a Christian, are these the marks that give your claim validity?*  
Being religious is not the will of the Father, being a true follower of Jesus is!

## 8-19-18 Will the True Followers of Jesus Please Stand Up – Acts 9:19b-31

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