

FOLLOW/FOLLOWER

In the Bible there are many references to followers or those who follow Jesus. However, the definition of what a follower really is much stronger than we accept. Basically today, we think as any one who says they believe in Jesus as being a follower. Scripture indicates that there are those who follow Jesus by doing what He says, as well as those who follow Jesus by acknowledging what He teaches, but not walking in it.

James 1:22

“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”

Note the word to describe this latter category of people as deluded. This seems to say that they may give mental assent to what is heard, but they aren't really followers as they aren't convinced enough (not really believe) to follow through by doing. One conclusion may be that a better term than believer, for someone who has been truly born again, may be follower.

There is another scripture which more clearly defines what a follower is:

Luke 9:23

“And He was saying to {them} all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.’”

According to this, being a follower is conditional on three things:

- (1) “deny himself” – This is not surprising since we are here, not for ourselves, but for the purpose the Lord made us (Ephesians 2:10). We aren't here to do what we want, say what we want, or get what we desire. The kingdom and righteousness are the top priorities in our lives (Matthew 6:33). We each have a part (I Corinthians 13:9) and are a joint who is to freely supply so that we can all grow together (Ephesians 4:16).
- (2) “take up his cross” – The Bible says that He laid down His life for us and we are to lay down our life for the brethren (I John 3:16). We are to prefer our brothers (Philippians 2:3) and even be willing to be treated unfairly or unjustly without cause (I Peter 2:19). In fact, the Bible says we were called for this purpose (I Peter 2:21). This is what makes the walk narrow instead of broad (Matthew 7:13-14).
- (3) “follow Me” – We are to be submissive to and obey Him. That's how we walk after Him. Jesus only did and said what the Father was doing (John 5:19), and that is precisely how we follow Jesus – walk in His footsteps and do only what He wants us to do. Be a true disciple, look like Him, talk like Him, and do the things He did (John 14:12).