What Does It Mean to Follow Christ?

How a follower of Christ lives according to Jesus' own words and example

A Christ-Follower's Priorities

What is on a Christ-follower's "must do" list?

Matthew 22:37-39

And He said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’

“This is the great and foremost commandment.

“The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ”

Matthew 22:37-39

- Must do #1 for Christ-followers
  - Love God with all our heart, soul, and mind
- Must do #2 for Christ-followers
  - Love others as ourselves

Matthew 22:37-39

- What is our life like when we love God with all our heart, soul, and mind?
  - Our life is centered around Him
  - Our greatest desire is to be in His presence
  - He is continually in our thoughts
  - We obey Him and seek to please Him
  - We find ways to express our love for Him
  - We gladly serve him in even the smallest ways

Matthew 22:37-39

- What are some signs that we may not be loving God with all our heart, soul, and mind?
  - We are thinking a lot about ourselves, our plans, and what we want
  - Something/someone is taking our attention away from Him
  - Our relationship with Him has lost passion and feeling
  - We are not doing what He wants
  - We rarely speak of Him to others
  - We are disconnected from His word, His people, His service, and from fellowship with Him

Matthew 22:37-39

- How do we keep our love for God strong?
  - Spend time (fellowship) with Him
  - Let Him speak to us rather than just visa versa
  - Immediately confess and turn from disobedience
  - Express our love with words, actions, worship, obedience, service, sacrifice, and speaking to others about Him
  - Remember want He's done for us

Matthew 22:37-39

And He said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’

“This is the great and foremost commandment.

“The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ”

Matthew 22:37-39

- What is involved in loving others as ourselves?
  - Seeing others as Jesus saw them:
    - Created in the image of God
    - Loved by God despite their sin
    - People he came to die for
    - People who do not know what they are doing
    - People who need grace

Matthew 22:37-39

- What is involved in loving others as ourselves?
  - Treating others as we want to be treated

    Matthew 7:12

    > In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Matthew 22:37-39

- What is involved in loving others as ourselves?
  - Loving those you wouldn't ordinarily love Matthew 5:43-47

Matthew 22:37-39

- What is involved in loving others as ourselves?
  - Taking practical care of people's needs

    1 John 3:17-18

    > But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

Matthew 22:37-39

- What is involved in loving others as ourselves?
  - Doing for others more than is required

    Matthew 5:39-42

    Matthew 26:6-13

    This involves personal sacrifice

    This involves denial of self

Matthew 22:37-39

- What is involved in loving others as ourselves? (Recap)
  - Seeing others as Jesus saw them
  - Treating others as we want to be treated
  - Loving those you wouldn't ordinarily love
  - Taking practical care of people's needs
  - Doing for others more than is required

A Christ-Follower's Identity

How does a Christ follower identify himself/herself?

Luke 22:27

“For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves.”

Luke 22:27

Jesus looked at himself as a servant (bond-slave)

This meant he chose:

- To take a lower position than he could have
- To serve rather than be served

Luke 22:24-26

And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest.

And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called ‘Benefactors.’

“But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant.”

Luke 22:27

Jesus expects us to look on ourselves as servants (bond-slave)

- Matthew 20:26-28, 23:11
- Mark 9:35, 10:42-45

This means we must choose:

- Not to measure greatness the way the world does
- To voluntarily assume the identity of a servant
- To delight in serving rather being served

Philippians 2:6-8

…who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Philippians 2:6-8

Jesus deliberately made himself a servant (bond-slave).

- He was, first, a servant of God
- He became a servant to others

  To serve he:

  - Surrendered what was legitimately his
  - Humbled himself
  - Assumed the mind-set and life-style of a servant

Philippians 2:6-8

What is a servant mind-set?

A servile person's mindset	A servant's mindset
Me-first	Others-first
The least I have to do	Whatever it takes
What do I get out of it?	What do others get out of it?
What can I avoid?	What can I find to do?
Am I getting ahead?	Are those I serve getting ahead?
What do others think of me?	What does God think of me?

John 13:4-5

(Jesus) got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself.

Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

Jesus' Steps to Serving

To actually serve, Jesus had to:

- Interrupt what he was doing
- Get up from where he was
- Change his clothes so he could get dirty
- Wrap a towel around his waist
- Get a pan of water
- Kneel before the first person with dirty feet
- Start washing that person's feet

Becoming a Servant

To become a servant (bond-slave):

- We have to accept a servant's identity
- We have to adopt a servant's mindset
- We have to decide to pursue Kingdom greatness
- We have to deal with pride and become humble
- We have to stop seeking to be served
- We have to start looking for ways to serve others
- We have to surrender our agenda

A Christ-Follower's Perspective on Life

How does a Christ follower think about his/her life?

Matthew 16:24

Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.”

Matthew 16:24

- How a Christ-follower thinks about himself
  - He/she denies self:

    I am not #1. God is.
- How a Christ-follower thinks about his life
  - He/she takes up his/her cross:

    My life is not mine.
    It is God's, to do with as he pleases.

My Perspective

- If I think I am #1:
  - I will seek above all to be happy
  - I will look out for myself
  - I will give and serve only when it makes me feel good
  - I will add or drop relationships based on my happiness
  - I will be friends to people who make me happy

My Perspective

- If I think I am #1:
  - What I own is mine and I will do with it as I want
  - I will resent and resist people who demand I do what they want

My Perspective

- If I think God is #1:
  - I will seek above all to make God happy
  - I will look out for God's interests
  - I will give and serve because it makes God feel good
  - I will add or drop relationships based on God's direction and plan
  - I will be friends to people, period

My Perspective

- If I think God is #1:
  - What I own is God's and I will do with it as He wants
  - I will listen to people who demand I do what they want and do as God wants

My Perspective

- If I think my life is mine:
  - I will do whatever I want as long as it is possible
  - I will do all I can to control my life so it is the way I want it to be
  - I will use my time, energy, opportunities, etc. to enhance my life
  - I will spend my time and money as I want

My Perspective

- If I think my life is mine:
  - I will do all I can to protect what I have
  - I will fight for my personal freedom so I can live as I please
  - I will reject advice that goes against what I want
  - I will leave relationships behind, if needed, to do what I want with my life

My Perspective

- If I think my life is God's:
  - I will do whatever God wants
  - I will do all I can to control my life so it is the way God wants it to be
  - I will use my time, energy, opportunities, etc. to do as God Wants
  - I will spend my time and money as God directs

My Perspective

- If I think my life is God's:
  - I will let God protect what I have if he chooses
  - I will surrender my personal freedom so I can live as God desires
  - I will follow Godly advice that helps me better serve God
  - I will build and transform relationships so I can better serve God

A Christ-Follower's Purpose

Why are Christ followers here?
What is their chief mission in life?

Matthew 28:19-20

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

My Purpose

- I am to make disciples everywhere I go.
  - This involves:
    - Leading people to faith in Christ
    - Baptizing them
    - Teaching them to be Christ-followers

My Purpose

- To fulfill the purpose of leading people to faith in Christ I must:
  - Point my life in that direction
  - Be willing to pay a price to stand out
  - Keep my testimony clear
  - Learn how to share the gospel
  - Pray faithfully

My Purpose

- To fulfill the purpose of leading people to faith in Christ I must:
  - Look for and take opportunities
  - Plan ahead
  - Learn to hear and depend on the Holy Spirit
  - Be ready to take a step-at-a-time with those I am trying to lead to faith in Christ

My Purpose

- I have been equipped to lead people to faith in Christ in a number of ways:
  - I have my own personal experience of coming to Christ to refer to
  - I have scripture that shows a person what he/she needs to do to become a born-again Christian
  - I have the Holy Spirit dwelling within to lead me, give me words to speak, and give me boldness

My Purpose

- I have been equipped to lead people to faith in Christ in a number of ways:
  - I have help and training available through others in the Body of Christ
  - My life has been changed so that it can be a witness to others
  - I have others in the Body of Christ to pray for me and my lost friends, and to help me lead them to Christ.

My Purpose

- I have been equipped to lead people to faith in Christ in a number of ways:
  - I may have a spiritual gift or gifts that can help me connect to lost people and win them to faith in Christ.

Gift of evangelism
Gift of mercy
Gift of wisdom
Gift of knowledge
Gift of helps
Gift of hospitality
Gift of giving

My Purpose

- I am to make disciples everywhere I go.
  - This involves:
    - Leading people to faith in Christ
    - Baptizing them
    - Teaching them to be Christ-followers

My Purpose

- To fulfill the purpose of baptizing new followers of Christ I must:
  - Be able to explain New Testament baptism
  - Point a new believer to a church that practices New Testament baptism
  - Accompany the new believer to that church or try to find someone to do so

My Purpose

- I am to make disciples everywhere I go.
  - This involves:
    - Leading people to faith in Christ
    - Baptizing them
    - Teaching them to be Christ-followers

My Purpose

- To fulfill the purpose of teaching new believers to be followers of Christ:
  - Introduce them to beginning discipleship materials or a discipleship group
  - Invite them to attend church with me or introduce them to a believing church near where they live.
  - Be sure they have a Bible and show them how to use it

My Purpose

- To fulfill the purpose of teaching new believers to be followers of Christ:
  - Follow up on them regularly.

My Purpose

- Resources I have to help me teach a new believer to follow Christ:
  - My local church
    - Bible study classes
    - Small groups
    - Worship services
    - Fellowship and serving opportunities

My Purpose

- Resources I have to help me teach a new believer to follow Christ:
  - My local church
    - People gifted to teach or experienced in discipling new Christians.
    - People their age if they are much older or younger than I am.

My Purpose

- Resources I have to help me teach a new believer to follow Christ:
  - Printed material
    - Booklets produced by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, The Navigators, CRU (Campus Crusade for Christ)
    - Books designed for new believers: *Basic Christianity,* John Stott, *New Believer's Guide to Effective Christian Living*, Greg Laurie, *Need to Know*, Gary Millar

My Purpose

- Resources I have to help me teach a new believer to follow Christ:
  - The Internet (caution!)
    - YouTube: The Beat with Allen Parr
    - ???

My Purpose

- I am to make disciples everywhere I go.
  - This involves:
    - Leading people to faith in Christ
    - Baptizing them
    - Teaching them to be Christ-followers

A Christ-Follower's Pursuit

What is it that I should be trying to accomplish with my life?

John 4:34

Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.”

John 5:30

“I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

John 6:38-40

“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

“This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.

“For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.”

John 14:31

…but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here.

Matthew 26:42

He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, “My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done.”

Jesus' Pursuit

- Jesus always pursued doing God's will, not his own.
  - This meant he had to seek his Father's will
  - It meant he had to choose to do his Father's will rather than his own
  - It meant he had to do exactly what his Father desired, no matter the personal cost.

My Pursuit

Matthew 7:21 (NASB95)

> “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.”

Matthew 12:50 (NASB95)

> “For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

My Pursuit

Matthew 6:10 (NASB95)

‘Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.’

My Pursuit

- I am to seek to know and completely follow God's will
  - This means:
    - I must always seek to know God's will in every situation
    - I must choose to do God's will rather than my own
    - I must do whatever God desires, no matter the personal cost.

My Pursuit

- I must seek to know God's will in every situation
  - Sources for discovering God's will:
    - The Bible
      - Specific commands (and warnings)
      - Principles that apply to many areas of life
      - Godly examples (and ungodly ones)
    - Prayer

      Mark 1:35 (NASB95)

      > In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.
    - The leadership of the Holy Spirit

My Pursuit

- I must choose to do God's will not my own:
  - I must choose this as my way of life (ahead of any situations that call for me to know God's specific will)
  - I must build my life upon God's revealed plan for all believers' lives. This way I am already seeking to do his will.
  - I must deny self and choose God's will in every situation

My Pursuit

- I must do whatever God desires, no matter the personal cost
  - This means putting doing God's will above everything else in my life
  - This means choosing to deny self, and what I want to do with my time, resources, etc.
  - This means trusting that God's desires will be the best regardless of what it will cost to do them

A Christ-Follower's Important Emotions

What emotions should I possess that would make me most like Christ?

Mark 10:21

Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, “One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

John 13:34-35

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 15:13

“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.”

Matthew 22:37-39

And He said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ”

One of Christ's Important Emotions

Jesus felt love:

- For lost people
- For his disciples
- For God

One of Christ's Important Emotions

Qualities of Jesus' love:

- It came from within, it was not drawn out by others
- It wasn't dependent on others' behavior
- It wasn't just for those he 'liked'
- It was unselfish and self-giving

Important Emotion #1: Love

Love for:

- Lost people
- Other disciples
- God

Important Emotion #1: Love

Love for lost people:

- Where do we find lost people to love?
  - In our family
  - At school or work
  - In our neighborhood
  - At the store, gas station, restaurant, beauty parlor or barber shop, etc.
  - In groups we or our spouse or children are part of
  - ???

Important Emotion #1: Love

Love for lost people:

- What does loving lost people involve?
  - Concern that they know the truth and are saved
  - Taking time and energy to build relationships with them
  - Demonstrating interest in them and what interests them
  - Not being judgmental
  - Looking for ways to share the truth with them
  - ???

Important Emotion #1: Love

Love for lost people:

- What can we do to show love?
  - Speak to them
  - Include them
  - Socialize with them
  - Show concern for them
  - Do the extra for them
  - Remember important days and events
  - Invite them to encounter Christ
  - ???

Important Emotion #1: Love

Love for lost people:

- What are some challenges in loving lost people?
  - Finding time/having opportunities/taking an opportunity
  - Our perspectives are different – can lead to tension or disagreement
  - Our lifestyle may be very different from theirs
  - Our moral and ethical values, and the behaviors they influence can bring conflict or tension
  - We may experience personal discomfort in being with them at times
  - We have to communicate in a way they can understand
  - ???

Important Emotion #1: Love

Love for lost people:

- What are some rewards in loving lost people?
  - Building and enjoying more friendships
  - Seeing people come closer to God
  - Feeling we are on-mission and doing what Jesus did
  - Learning to better communicate and relate to lost people and their needs and concerns
  - ???

Important Emotion #1: Love

Love for other disciples:

Why is love for other disciples important?

- Because we've been loved by God, 1 John 4:11
- Jesus commanded it, John 15:12
- It shows we are Jesus' disciples, John 13:35
- It shows we are born-again, 1 John 2:9-10, 3:10, 4:8
- It fulfills the Law, Galatians 5:13-14
- It is the fruit of the Holy Spirit within us, Galatians 5:22
- It is what God has taught us to do, 1 Thessalonians 4:9

Important Emotion #1: Love

Love for other disciples:

What should love for other disciples look like?

- Like Jesus' love for us, John 13:34-35, 15:13
- Like love for members of our family, Ephesians 2:19, Galatians 6:10

Important Emotion #1: Love

Love for other disciples:

Specific directions governing love for other disciples:

The "One Anothers"		
Build up	Encourage	Care for
Make allowances for	Prefer/Value others above yourself	Submit to
Accept	Serve	Pursue peace with
Live in harmony with	Admonish	Greet with love
Bear one another's burdens	Be patient and tolerant with	Forgive
Seek what is good for one another	Stimulate one another to do good	Confess to
Be hospitable to	Pray for	

Important Emotion #1: Love

Love for other disciples:

Examples of love for other disciples:

- Selling property to support other disciples, Acts 2:44-45
- Risking rejection to support another disciple, Acts 9:26-28
- Spending days in prayer for another disciple, Acts 12:5

Important Emotion #1: Love

Love for:

- Lost people
- Other disciples
- God

Important Emotion #1: Love

Love for other disciples:

Additional instructions about love for fellow disciples:

- We should show love to all other disciples, Matthew 5:46-47, Colossians 1:4
- We must love without hypocrisy, Romans 12:9
- Our love should be fervent, 1 Peter 1:22 (Acts 12:5)
- Everything we do should be done in love, 1 Corinthians 16:14
- Our love should continue to grow, Philippians 1:9, 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10

Important Emotion #1: Love

Love for other disciples:

What will loving other disciples require?

- Giving it our priority
- Giving others our time and attention
- Being sensitive and aware
- Dealing with personal selfishness
- Acting loving when we don't feel loving
- Giving our resources and energy as they need
- Demonstrating, not just feeling, love
- Relying on the Holy Spirit for direction and to produce his love in us
- ???

Important Emotion #1: Love

Love for other disciples:

Our love for other disciples will produce:

- Deeper Christ-likeness in us
- Greater unselfishness
- A greater spirit of unity within the church
- A deep sense of family, belonging, and being cared for in ourselves and others
- Greater faith
- A more powerful witness
- ???

Matthew 9:36

Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.

Matthew 14:14

When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick.

Matthew 15:32

And Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, “I feel compassion for the people, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way.”

Matthew 20:34

Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him.

Mark 1:41

Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, “I am willing; be cleansed.”

Luke 7:13

When the Lord saw her, He felt compassion for her, and said to her, “Do not weep.”

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

One of Christ's Important Emotions

Jesus felt compassion:

- For spiritually needy people
- For the sick
- For the hungry
- For the blind
- For lepers
- For grieving parents
- For spiritually lost people

One of Christ's Important Emotions

Evidence of Jesus' compassion:

- Teaching the spiritually neglected
- Healing the sick
- Feeding the hungry
- Raising the dead
- Dying for the lost

Important Emotion #2: Compassion

Jesus taught us to show compassion to others:

- Matthew 5:43-48
- Luke 10:33
- Luke 15:20

Important Emotion #2: Compassion

The New Testament teaches us to show compassion to others:

- Colossians 3:12
- James 1:27
- 1 John 3:17

Important Emotion #2: Compassion

What is compassion?

- Compassion is a deep awareness of and sympathy for another's suffering
- In the Bible, compassion is always both a feeling of sympathy and the appropriate action based on that feeling.

Important Emotion #2: Compassion

What are we to feel compassion for?

- Others' physical or practical circumstances and needs
- Others' emotional needs and expressions
- Other's spiritual needs, felt and expressed or unfelt by them

Important Emotion #2: Compassion

Who are we to show compassion to?

- To all, not just those who are friends and nice to us
- To anyone whose need we know that we can help
- To those who are the weakest and poorest in society
- To all who do not yet know Jesus as their Savior

Mark 10:14

But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, “Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”

Matthew 18:5-6

“And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me; but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.”

Mark 3:4-5

And He said to them, “Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?” But they kept silent.

After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

Mark 11:15-17

Then they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves; and He would not permit anyone to carry merchandise through the temple.

And He began to teach and say to them, “Is it not written, ‘MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL THE NATIONS’? But you have made it a ROBBERS’ DEN.”

Matthew 23:13

“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.”

One of Christ's Important Emotions

Jesus felt indignation:

- About turning innocent children away from him
- About causing children to sin
- About lack of compassion where compassion should be expected
- About using faith for personal gain
- About religious hypocrisy

Important Emotion #3: Indignation

What indignation is:

Righteous anger provoked by mistreatment, injustice, unfairness, etc.

Important Emotion #3: Indignation

Over what should one who follows Christ become indignant?

1. Mistreating others
2. Disregarding others
3. Neglecting others
4. Oppressing others
5. Being unjust toward others
6. Degrading others

Important Emotion #3: Indignation

Over what should one who follows Christ become indignant?

7. Using others for selfish purposes
8. Taking advantage of others
9. Influencing others to sin
10. Misleading others spiritually
11. Interfering with God's work in others

Important Emotion #3: Indignation

Over what should one who follows Christ become indignant?

12. Using religion for personal gain
13. Assuming a right only God has
14. Religious pretending or hypocrisy
15. Degrading Christ, his gospel, his church, God, the Holy Spirit, etc.

Important Emotion #3: Indignation

Caution about believers and anger:

Ephesians 4:26 (NASB95)

BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger,

Important Emotion #3: Indignation

How should a Christ-follower express indignation:

1. By pointing out what is wrong
2. By attempting to right what is wrong (when possible)
3. By confronting the people who are in the wrong (when possible)
4. By taking the side of those unjustly treated