

## Don't Settle for Christian

*Ken (not his real name) is a mechanic in the Seattle area. He was one of the elders in my church. In Sunday school one morning he said, "I never tell my coworkers that I'm a Christian because I don't want them to see me and then think bad about Christians and the church." I think many of us can sympathize with Ken's sentiments. Christianity already has a pretty lousy reputation in the US ... why would we want to add to that? Indeed, one of the reasons so many people are renouncing their Christianity has nothing to do with their belief in Jesus ... it has to do with their distaste for anything Christian. Perhaps it's time to stop settling for anything Christian.*

### Matthew 5:1-2

1. Jesus taught his \_\_\_\_\_ – someone who is a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Disciples are \_\_\_\_\_ to what they learn – they are \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Disciples love \_\_\_\_\_ more than they love themselves.
4. Disciples are willing to do \_\_\_\_\_ to make more disciples.

### ***My Count Me In! Commitment***

- I'll get a Discipleship Journal
- I'll read the Gospel of John (followed by the other Gospels) and underline every instruction Jesus gave about what it means to be a disciple ... on of his followers
- I'll make a list of those instructions in my Discipleship Journal
- I'll choose one of those instructions per week to specifically work on and apply to my behavior and record it in my Discipleship Journal
- I'll review my journal every morning as a part of my discipleship plan ... and every evening I'll write a short note on how I applied Jesus' teachings to my day

# Digging Deeper

Week of July 18, 2021

*Don't Settle for Christian*

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:1–2

**Introduction:** The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) may not be the best thing since sliced bread, but the Campbell-Stone trio were onto something. Pretty much anyone can legitimately call themselves a Christian in our culture – after all, isn't the US a "Christian Nation"? But it takes someone who's pretty committed to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. What's it like to really be a person of the parentheses?

1. Read Matthew 5:1–2. This is the introduction to the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' masterful discourse of all matters of faith. Why do you think it was so important to Matthew to remind his readers that Jesus taught this lesson specifically to his disciples?
2. Read Acts 11:19–26. Why do you think the community began calling the new church members "Christians"? Do you think it was a positive name or a negative name? Why do you think so?
3. Read Acts 19:8–10. Paul seems to shrug off the title "Christian" and seems to prefer being known as an advocate for The Way (he specifically calls himself a member of The Way in Acts 24:14). Why do you think he chose that title?
4. Have you ever been embarrassed to be associated with "Christianity"? If so, what were the circumstances?
5. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was launched, in a large part, because the founders believed that all the denominations were expected to be Christian – we were all a part of a larger fellowship called "The Church." How has this understanding served Christianity in the US? How has it been a problem?
6. What do you think the differences are between a cultural Christian and a practicing disciple of Jesus Christ?
7. What do you think the solution is to Christianity's poor reputation?