



WEST VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

9:30 am Bible Class—all ages
10:30 am Sunday Worship
5:00 pm Proverbs study (online)
7:00 pm Wednesday Bible Class

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Why Do Christians Follow Jesus AND His Apostles?

To wear the name Christian is not just to honor Jesus but to acknowledge Him as “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16). “Christ” is not a name of Jesus but a title; it is a brief description of Jesus as “the King of kings and Lord of lords” (1 Timothy 6:15). These days, the position kings and queens hold is often ceremonial. Jesus however holds real authority, in fact, “all authority... in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18).

Today’s Christians follow in the footsteps of their first century counterparts as they hold up the absolute authority of Jesus. These early Christians dedicated themselves to Jesus because they saw Him as the exclusive source of salvation (Acts 4:12). They did not want to do or even say anything that would not meet with His approval (Colossians 3:17). To them, following Jesus was equal to following God (Acts 5:29).

What might be surprising to some though given the above description of those early Christians is the description of them given by Luke, which also describes Christians everywhere: “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). Shouldn’t it say that they continued in Jesus’ doctrine/teaching? And before you say, “Well, the apostles just taught what Jesus did,” note what Luke later said about these apostles: “And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people... Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly” (Acts 5:12-13).

Before you accuse the apostles of usurping Jesus’ position of authority, realize that these apostles were a part of Jesus’ plan for delivering His authoritative teaching to mankind. An apostle literally refers to “a group of highly honored believers with a special function as God’s envoys.” In the words of Paul, they were “ambassadors for Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:20) and had been given a message to teach from Christ through the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:11-16) just as Jesus had planned (John 14:26; 16:13). Though this position commands respect, it’s important to note that the apostles saw themselves as servants who were subject both to the Lord and the very messages they spoke and wrote (1 Corinthians 4:1-6), messages that they couldn’t change in any way and still be pleasing to God (Galatians 1:6-11).

Before you call yourself a Christian, ask yourself: Do I honor the teachings of Jesus and His apostles like those first century Christians did? Do I “continue steadfastly” in them? Or do I put myself up to the level of the apostles, “join them” in effect, by denying what the apostles spoke and wrote or claiming that God has a new and different message for me? To follow the “King of kings” is to follow the “Law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2) contained in the New Testament of the Bible.

If you have questions about any of this, please reach out!