

One Huge Sign You Might Be a Fickle Follower of Jesus

Some of the same people who flocked to Jesus' signs later fled from His sayings. "And a great crowd followed Him, because they saw His signs which He did for the sick (John 6:2).

The same crowd who was convinced of Jesus' Messiahship and wanted to crown Him king deserted Him a day or two later (John 6:14-15, 66). This was in the aftermath of His feeding the 5,000 men, not counting women and children, the only miracle of Christ recorded in all four Gospels. Riding a brief wave of popularity, Jesus did not cater to the crowd but rather withdrew from them. Unlike many modern preachers and politicians, He was never swayed by the opinions of the masses, knowing they could change instantly. Remember, some of the same people who waved palm fronds and sang "Hosanna to the King, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord," later screamed "give us Barabbas" and "crucify Him" to Pontius Pilate.

People's emotions and opinions fluctuate like the stock market. Human nature is fickle—likely to change, not constant or loyal in affection.

John 6 describes a horde of fickle followers who trailed Jesus because of the loaves he gave them instead of their love for Him. Jesus bluntly stated, "The truth of the matter is that you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you believe in me" (Jn. 6:26, TLB). Who wouldn't follow a Messiah who works miracles and gives away free food? Don't misunderstand; God can and will provide for our physical needs, and there are many fringe benefits of serving Him, but He wants to give us more than natural things. He wants to give us spiritual things. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, which fittingly means "house of bread," and He is the bread of life

who nourishes the spiritual needs of starving humanity. "Jesus replied, 'I am the Bread of Life. No one coming to me will ever be hungry again. Those believing in me will never thirst'" (John 6:35, MEV). A church sign said it well: "Without the bread of life, you're toast!"

The crowd feasted on free bread and fish but found Jesus' strange sayings too hard to swallow. Truth, like medicine, doesn't always taste good or make us feel good initially, but eventually heals our heart and frees us from falsehood. The statement that offended and provoked the crowd the most was, "Truly, truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life. And I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed" (John 6:53-55).

Missing the spiritual truth, they assumed Jesus was speaking literally, "The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us His flesh to eat?'" (John 6:52). They thought this same man they were ready to proclaim the Messiah and crown king only hours earlier had lost His marbles. Jesus, of course, was speaking figuratively, not advocating cannibalism or vampirism.

To eat His flesh is to partake of His Word, for He is the "Word became flesh" (John 1:14). To drink His blood is to sip in His life-giving Spirit ("the life of the flesh is in the blood" [Lev. 17:11]).

The confused crowd quickly turned into an angry mob. "When they heard this, many of His disciples said, 'This is a hard saying. Who can listen to it?'" (Jn. 6:60). As a result, many of His fickle followers defected from their faith—"From that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him" (John 6:66). After the massive crowd, who watched Him feed them miraculously, dwindled to a handful, Jesus turned to His trusted 12 and questioned, "Do you also want to go away?"

(Jn. 6:67). Peter responded with keen spiritual insight and a bold affirmation of faith, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:68-69).

So, what is our main motive for following Christ? Is it because of the blessings He bestows on us or because of who He is and how much He deserves our love and loyalty? If God never does another thing for us, He's already done enough for us to serve Him the rest of our lives. We owe an eternal debt of gratitude we can never repay. Repeatedly, the Bible challenges us to seek God's face, not just His hand. Seeking His face is pursuing a deep relationship with Him; seeking His hand is chasing after the blessings He provides. If we learn to seek His face, His hand of favor will follow. Are we following for the loaves or for the love? Are we merely flocking after His signs or feasting on His sayings? Are we like spoiled kids who only want money, toys and candy, seeking after the gifts of God or after the heart of the Giver?

Many fickle followers today are wavering in their commitment and defecting from their faith. Paul warned of a great "falling away" in the last days (2 Thess. 2:3) and Jesus predicted widespread apostasy, "Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold" (Matt. 24:12, NLT). We must determine more than ever to follow Jesus no matter what. As the old song says, "I have decided to follow Jesus/no turning back, no turning back! "Let us firmly hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for He who promised is faithful" (Heb. 10:23, MEV).

Don't be like the fair-weather friends who ran after Jesus for miracles and free food, but rejected His words. Follow Him for the love not just for the loaves. Don't be a fickle follower.
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