

Introduction:

- If you go shopping in my favorite coffee shop you will find: "Blueberry Pomegranate, 100 percent juice, all natural." The label features a picture of a ripe pomegranate and mounds of fat, perfect blueberries and then you can read the ingredients list: 'Filtered water, pear juice concentrate, apple juice concentrate, grape juice concentrate.' Where was the blueberry? Where was the pomegranate? Finally I found them, fifth and seventh on a list of nine ingredients, after mysteriously unspecified 'natural flavors.' By law, food ingredients are listed in descending order of weight. That means a product contains the greatest proportion of the first ingredient on the list and successively less of those farther down. So according to this list, the jug in my hand held mostly water and other juices, with just enough blueberry and pomegranate for flavor and color. In the bottom corner of the front label, in small, easy-to-miss type, were the tell-tale words: 'Flavored juice blend with other natural ingredients.' The enticing pictures and clever labeling were decoys to sell a diluted, blueberry-pomegranate flavored product, convincingly disguised to look like something it wasn't. **APPLICATION:** What if I had an ingredients list printed on me? Would Jesus be the main ingredient? If not, how far down the list would he be? Would my 'label' accurately represent my contents? Or would I falsely project a misleading outward appearance that cleverly masked diluted ingredients? My packaging may be convincing. I may look and sound like the real thing. But what if someone came to me looking for Jesus beneath my "Christian" label and found something else? Something Jesus-flavored, but not Jesus-filled?" I believe God is looking for radical followers! The main ingredient in that being Christ Jesus.
- What does a radical follower of Christ look like?
- What does it mean to be a radical follower of Christ?
- Do I really want to be a radical follower of Christ?

I. What Does It Mean to be Radical?

- A. The word radical means going to the root or origin of a thing; basic fundamentals. It also means extreme. And last it is a person who holds or follows strong conviction or extreme principle. I.e.
 1. If someone has a medical issue and they need a surgery often times it is called radical (meaning they have to remove an organ or very invasive).
 2. A person could be a radical Star Wars fan. Radical hunter. They go to extremes.
 3. A negative but accurate illustration is radical Islam. They are muslims that hold extreme understanding of the Koran. They would be of those who follow strong conviction or extreme principals.
- B. To be a radical Christian means that you are a Christian clear to the very core of your being. You are person that holds the with conviction the basic fundamentals of the faith. When people look at your life they can say, "There is an extreme Christian or a serious Christian."
- C. Lets clarify what I are not saying:
 1. Radical Christians are not violent in nature.
 2. Radical Christians do no put others down to lift themselves up.
 3. Radical Christians are not religiously doing duty to earn a place with God.

II. What Does It Mean to Be A Radical Follower of Christ?

- A. First of all it means that you have Christ as the very center of your life. I.e. He is the head and you are the body. All of your life is processed through Him.
 1. He is the center of your life. You don't have devotions you live devoted.
 2. He is the center of your marriage. *Husbands love your wife like Christ loved the Church.*
 3. He is the center of your finances. Tithes and offerings are understood to be two different things and you actively practice both because you understand both to be a matter of trust.
 4. He is the center of your family. You family revolves around Him.
 5. He is the center of your calendar. You plan your week around Him not around the kids, not around the hobby, not around work.

6. To ponder: "Do we really believe Jesus is worth abandoning everything for to put Him at the center of our life?" A belief isn't real unless it affects one's actions when something is at stake. So in that light, would you say that you really believe Jesus is worth abandoning everything for? Why or why not?

- B. You regularly practice spiritual disciplines of the faith, not out of religious duty but because they lead to intimacy with Christ and extreme life in Him.
 1. Reading the Word. Not just reading but you love it. Because you know it is God's spoken word to you.
 - a) "*The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.*" (John 6:63, NLT)
 - b) Heb 4:12; Ps 119
 - c) Meditation on the word. Keeps us prosperous and successful.
 2. Actively praying.
 - a) Quiet time.
 - b) Family time. Your family must see the importance of prayer to you.
 - c) Corporate time.
 3. Fasting. Jesus did not do away with fasting.
 4. Community. Engaging with other disciples.
 5. Evangelism. Looking to engage those who are outside of Christ.
 6. Wonder worshippers. Not what we do on Sunday and Wednesday but all the time! John 4.
- C. Live to influence others/make disciples for Christ.
 1. We live to introduce others to person of Jesus Christ.
 - a) I sow the word knowing that God makes it grow.
 - b) I fish for men!
 2. We live to encourage others with the grace, kindness, and Spirit of God within us. Both believers and unbelievers.
 3. Radical in loving God and others.
 - a) Love God by living a worshipping example.
 - b) We love others with the love of God, unconditional.
 - c) We love by using our spiritual gifts.
 4. We live to make disciples. This takes effort and it takes time.

III. Pictures of Radical Christians

- A. Stephen: was a deacon. Man full of faith who worked miracles. Martyred.
- B. Barnabas and later John Mark. You had to radical to travel with Paul.
- C. Mother Teresa. Lived the Gospel. Lived love. Lived compassion.
- D. Todd White

Conclusion:

- There is an uncorroborated anecdote told of Abe Lincoln who supposedly went to the slave block to buy a slave. He bid on, and won, a young girl. Upon taking possession of her, he said, "Young lady, you are free." Confused and incredulous, she fearfully asked him what he meant by the statement. Lincoln reiterated his comment, "It means you are really free." "Free to do as I please, and to say what I please, and to go where I please?" she asked, hoping for some measure of clarification. "Yes," he confirmed, "you are free to do, and to say, and to go as you please." "Then," said the girl with tearful gratitude, "I will go with you!" **APPLICATION** Christ has paid for you with His own blood (Revelation 5:9). In Him, we are bond slaves, *not* born of compulsion, but born of gratitude. Won't you allow Him to "take possession" of your life? Then, in your "freedom," gladly follow Him! You were bought at a price; do not become slaves men" (1 Corinthians 7:23). "If the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).