

Many people in the world today call themselves “Christian,” but there are so many conflicting beliefs and doctrines taught among these people. So what beliefs must a person hold in order to be a *true* Christian? In order to answer this question, we need to look to God’s Word. Let’s see what the Bible has to say.



“Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6) So the first point is that one must believe that God exists, and becomes the rewarder of those sincerely seeking him.

Christians view the Bible as God’s revelation to humanity

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17) The sincere Christian would believe the Bible (the 66 books from Genesis to Malachi) is the word of God.

The sincere Christian accepts **“Scripture”** as **“the word of God” (John 10:35 NIV; (1 Thessalonians 2:13))**. They would not view the Bible as a human invention or product, but as God’s revelation to humanity.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16) Essential to this belief would be that God sent his Son, Jesus, to die for the sins of humanity. And each sincere Christian would exercise their faith in harmony with this fact, which means their life is built around, and upon, this belief.

“If you love me, keep my commands.” (John 14:15) A sincere Christian will not just believe these things in an intellectual way, but will be obedient to all of God’s laws and principles from the heart. Real Christians must believe, but be **“doers of the word and not hearers only” (James 1:22 HCSB).**

A central belief for sincere Christians is expressed at Matthew 22:37-39: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” Being a Christian does not involve following a lot of specific rules, or dos and don’ts. Yes, Christians need to avoid specific sins, such as murder, adultery and fornication, stealing, lying, etc. If one observes these two greatest commandments, loving God and other people, he/she will not knowingly, or deliberately do anything to hurt God or other people. Since **“all fall short” (Romans 3:23)**, true Christians **“confess”** their **“sins”** to God, and he **“will forgive us our sins” (1 John 1:9).**

These are some major principles that sincere Christians must hold. While the principles herein cover broadly what each Christian must believe, every detail is not explained in them. The Bible has a treasure house of information that does cover everything a Christian needs to know. Being a genuine Christian is a lifelong learning and growing process. No Christian ever reaches a point where he/she “knows it all,” or has achieved such a Christian maturity that cannot be improved.

All Bible verses quoted from the New International Version (NIV), except where noted otherwise.