



## Brand Recognition

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**Scripture:** Acts 11:25–26; Acts 6:7, 9:26, 36; John 13:33–36

**Idea:** Christian, it's not what you think.

**Introduction:** *[Build introduction around branding and labels.]*

1. We all know what an American, Egyptian, Canadian, comedian is.
2. So, what's a Christian?
3. What comes to mind when you hear that word?
4. If someone were to ask you are you a Christian, would you say straight up, yes? Would you qualify it? Last guy I asked said, "I'm spiritual."
5. If you were raised in a church like the one I was in, you *became a Christian* at a moment in time by *praying the prayer*.
6. For some of you, it was baptism, for others confirmation.

*That's what made you a Christian.*

7. Some grew up thinking that your brand was the true brand. Everybody else . . . those Protestants . . . those Catholics . . . those liberal Episcopalians . . . those narrow-minded Baptists . . . those money-hungry, ego-driven mega-churches. They aren't real Christians. Some of you may say, "I was a Christian, but not anymore." Someone else would say, "You can't 'used to be a Christian.' Once in, always in."
8. Some of you grew up hearing "Once in, not always in" and you lived in fear of not being "in." Driving home from that not-so-Christian date and knowing if you were to die tonight, hell's fires would consume your flesh.
9. For some it's all about what you *believe* that makes you a Christian. For others it's all about how you *behave*.
10. Others would say, "I hate Christians. They are judgmental, homophobic moralists who think they are the only ones going to heaven and secretly relish the fact that everyone else is going to hell."

*There's a lot of truth to that. I bet if I had seen what you have seen, experienced what you have experienced, I would feel the very same way.*

*When you open the New Testament and read how the term came to be, you may be surprised to discover that all of what we have said so far is incorrect. No one prays to become a Christian in the Bible. No one is baptized to become a Christian in the Bible. There weren't any brands. While people hated Christians, it wasn't because they felt judged by them. They considered them a threat to the ancient pagan religions, including Judaism.*