

I just now - fifteen minutes ago - came to realize with the most crystal clarity I have ever had why I cannot call myself a Christian. Of course, as most of you know, I have not called myself a Christian publicly for a very long time, twenty years or so I suppose. But a number of people tell me that they think at heart I'm a Christian, and I sometimes think of myself as a Christian agnostic/atheist. Their thinking, and mine, has been that if I do my best to follow the teachings of Jesus, in some respect I'm a Christian, even if I don't believe that Jesus was the son of God, or that he was raised from the dead, or that... or even that God exists. In fact I don't believe all these things. But can't I be a Christian in a different sense, one who follows Jesus' teachings?

Fifteen minutes ago I realized with startling clarity why I don't think so.

This afternoon in my undergraduate course on the New Testament I was ...

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