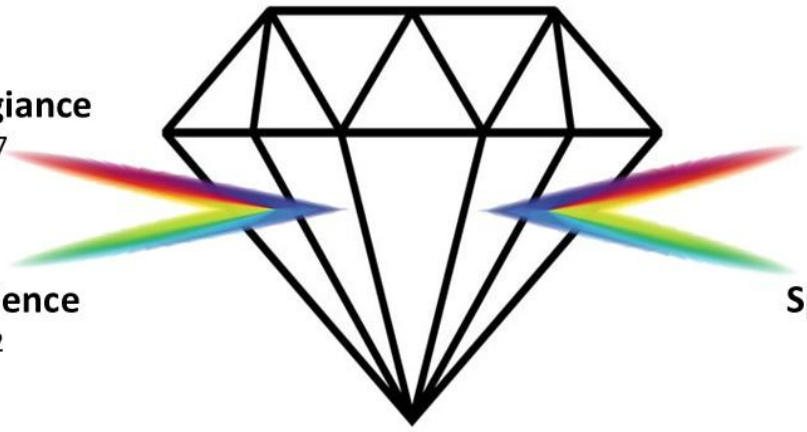
Certified Breed

Rocky Mountain Breed

- Size
- Color
- Temperament
- Gait

Certified Discipleship

Reflecting His image



Sacrificial Allegiance
Luke 14:26-27

Servant Love
John 13:34-35

Faithful Obedience
John 8:31-32

Spiritual Fruitfulness
John 15:8

The **Rocky Mountain Horse** is a relatively new breed, originating in the late 1800s in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains of eastern Kentucky. In those early days, no one thought to document these horses. The mountain people who bred and used them had no idea their sturdy, sure-footed companions would one day be recognized as a distinct and remarkable breed. For years, the existence of these horses was virtually unknown outside the region.

A *breed* is defined as a group of animals with a common origin and distinctive traits that are consistently passed down to their offspring. These shared traits—appearance, temperament, and performance—set one breed apart from another.

According to the **Rocky Mountain Horse Association (RMHA)**, the breed traces back to a gaited colt brought from the Rocky Mountain region to Kentucky around 1890. Locals called him *"the Rocky Mountain Horse"* because of his origin, and he became the foundation sire for the breed that now bears his name.

Registration and Certification

Unlike most breeds, the Rocky Mountain Horse is both *registered* and *certified*.

- **Registration** verifies lineage—confirming that a horse descends from recognized Rocky Mountain stock.
- **Certification**, however, confirms the presence of the breed's defining traits.

At about two years of age, a horse may be inspected by three approved examiners who evaluate its size, color, temperament, and gait. Only if all these traits are present will the horse be *certified* as a true Rocky Mountain Horse. A horse may be registered by birthright, but only certification proves that it fully embodies the breed.

The Certified Breed of Disciples

Throughout history, teachers and philosophers have had their disciples—Plato had his, Jewish rabbis had theirs, and Jesus had His. But what made the disciples of Jesus different? All were learners, yet Jesus uniquely defined the marks of those who truly followed Him.

When Jesus called men to follow Him, it was not a casual invitation. It was a summons to follow Him *completely*—in every way, everywhere, and at all times. The Gospel records tell the story of ordinary men who struggled, failed, learned, and were ultimately transformed. Their lives bore such unmistakable evidence of having been with Jesus that even their enemies recognized it (Acts 4:13).

Jesus made His expectations clear:

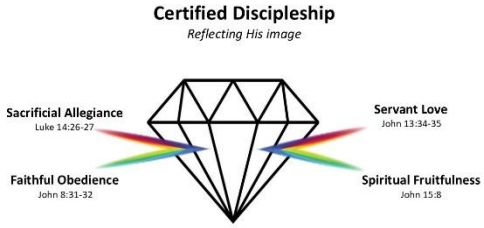
"A pupil (disciple) is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40).

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus often said, "If you…then you are My disciple," or conversely, "If you do not…then you are not My disciple." In these statements, He defined the distinguishing marks—the *breed traits*—of His followers.

Just as the Rocky Mountain Horse must display its defining characteristics to be certified, so the disciples of Jesus are to display observable traits that identify them as His own. We can call ourselves disciples, but would Jesus *certify* us? Would observers of our lives see the marks He described?

The Four Certified Traits of Christ's Disciples

1. Sacrificial Allegiance



"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26).

A disciple intentionally submits to the authority and leadership of Christ—choosing His Kingdom over personal interests or comfort.

2. Faithful Obedience

"If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:31–32).

A disciple continually makes God's Word the ultimate authority for life—seeking to know His truth, obey His commands, and live with a biblical worldview.

3. Servant Love

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you… By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34–35).

A disciple grows in love for others—expressed through grace, community, forgiveness, and acts of service.

4. Spiritual Fruitfulness

"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples" (John 15:8).

A disciple abides in Christ, producing visible fruit—godly character, influence, and Kingdom impact.

A Breed Apart

Christ's disciples are to be a *breed apart*—not merely *registered* by name but *certified* by character. Their lives increasingly reveal the evidence of **sacrificial allegiance, faithful obedience, servant love, and spiritual fruitfulness**. These are the traits of those who truly bear the mark of the Master, evidence that they have been with Jesus.