

Reformation Versus Relationship

John MacArthur

I. Introduction.

- A. Text: Matthew 12:43-50.
- B. There have been many calls for morality.
- C. Morality by itself is more dangerous than immorality
- D. The Pharisees were moralists, but they rejected God himself in their pursuit of morality.
- E. Morality creates an illusion of safety. (Matthew 23)
- F. One must come to Jesus Christ instead of morals. Relationship precedes reformation.

II. Reformation.

- A. One would be better off to be immoral so that he could face his need for a savior than live under the illusion that an outward code makes one right with God.
- B. The Pharisees preached morality, but they would not receive Christ. (Acts 19)
 - 1. A moral self-righteous person becomes a victim of Satan more than a follower of Christ ever would.
 - 2. The disciple of moralism is dually made a disciple of hell. (Ephesians 3:17, Matthew 23:15)
- C. Jesus did not preach morality—he preached repentance from sin.

III. Relationship.

- A. Jesus offers a relationship instead of reformation—he is the only one that can fill that empty place.
- B. We can get this relationship by accepting Jesus as God's Son. (Matthew 3:17; 17:15; 18:11; 2 Peter 3:9; Acts 4:12)

Application Questions:

1. How would you distinguish between moralism and seeking to live a moral life?

2. What are the dangers of moralism?

3. How can every day Christians fall into the trap of moralism? How can you better guard your faith against this kind of thinking? Explain.
