

K.P. Yohannan:

Imagine with me that someone bought a whole bunch of bright red, crisp apples and tied them onto an apple tree. Everyone who casually walked by the tree would think, Wow, that tree looks great. See all of those apples? Unless of course they studied it carefully, they wouldn't notice that the apples were just tied onto the branches. If you let some time go by though, anyone would be able to notice that the now-rotting and sour apples were not really a part of the tree.

Our Christianity can be like that apple tree. By knowing the appropriate behaviors, we can make our lives look so spiritual—our praying, our singing, our worshiping and our words. We can become satisfied with simply doing the right things and having the right doctrines. However, here is the problem: You and I can be right in our understanding and all our doctrines, yet be completely wrong on the inside.

Look at the Pharisees. They had everything right. They knew that God is holy. They knew all the laws. They were missionaries. They fasted. They gave. They prayed. They taught the Scriptures.

So what is the problem? Everything began and ended with them. God had no part in it. What God wants us to be goes beyond being right and doing all the right things before man. When you are just performing, Christ is still on the outside. Our "apples" should be produced from the tree. Who we are and what we do must start with the vine or our fruit will not last.

Our problem so often is that we want a plan. We want an agenda. We want a book to tell us step 1, 2, 3: "This is how to become godly." But my brothers and sisters, godliness is not a list of how-tos; rather, it is the very life of Christ. How do we become godly? The answer is Jesus.