



One of the best ways to describe the difference between Religion or Relationship is by this famous unidentified quote...

**“Religion** is a guy in church thinking about fishing.

**Relationship** is a guy fishing thinking about God.”

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### What is religion?

The dictionary defines religion as...

*“a specific fundamental set of beliefs and practices generally agreed upon by a number of persons or sects.”*

Religion is much more a mechanical way of worship that is based upon rules. These rules have a habit of enslaving people with guilt and shame. It's more based on what we have to do rather than what God has already done.

Jesus spoke to the people...

*“Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else: “Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer, ‘I thank you, God, that I am not like other people—cheaters, sinners, adulterers. I’m certainly not like that tax collector! I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income. But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed.*

*Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, ‘O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.’ I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. (Luke 18:9-14 NLT)”*

With religion, unfortunately it becomes more about us looking good, rather than asking for God's goodness to work within us. That is why Jesus referred to the Pharisees, the religious leaders of the times, as “white washed tombs, beautiful on the outside and dead on the inside. (Matthew 23:27).

Building a relationship with Jesus, brings forth a healing process that we can grow from. This relationship is not about making bad people good. It's about making sick people well.

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### How do we move from religion to relationship?

It's quite simple. In doing life, we do life on life's terms, not on our terms. We must face a reality that we are powerless over what life throws at us. Whether we are talking about the people around us, our health, work issues or simply traffic on the way to work ,, guess what? We're powerless.

However, our very human nature has always had a problem with being powerless. But dealing with the powerlessness in our lives brings us closer to having a relation-

ship with God. This relationship with God proclaims a simple but true phrase, “I can't, He can, let Him”. We relinquish the burden from our shoulders and give it to God. In this relationship Jesus says to us...

*“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30 NIV)”*

He wants to be by our side and help us as we journey through life. God loves us so much that He sent His one and only son, Jesus, to die for us (John 3:16).

It breaks down like this...

RELIGION: What I do.

RELATIONSHIP: What Jesus already did.

RELIGION: It's all about me.

RELATIONSHIP: It's all about Him.

RELIGION: I obey and God loves me.

RELATIONSHIP: Because God loves me I obey.

RELIGION: obligation

RELATIONSHIP: gift

RELIGION: pride

RELATIONSHIP: humility

RELIGION: do

RELATIONSHIP: done