

A Study of the Gospel of Mark
Week 7: Mark 7:1-30 | Oct. 19-20, 2013

Confessing Jesus, Part 1:
What Makes Me Unclean,
What Makes Me Clean?



Jesus gets rough with the hypocritical Pharisees and their elaborate man-made rules and traditions. We have all been influenced by various traditions in our lives. What religious traditions influence your life? Are they God-made or man-made? Are they a good or bad influence? Explain.

Man's rules vs. God's law | Read Mark 7:1-13.

The Pharisees ask Jesus why His disciples don't follow their complicated hand washing rules before eating. Jesus answered by quoting the Old Testament:

The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men. Isaiah 29:13 (NIV 1984)

And Jesus adds in Mark 7:8, "You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men."

[Q] Why do you think Jesus quoted the words of Isaiah?
What point was Jesus trying to make?

For the Pharisees, their oral law (man-made) was more authoritative than the Scriptures (God's law given to Moses).

Make it personal:

[Q] In our culture, what competes or conflicts with the authority of Scripture?

[Q] What role does Scripture have in your life? What level of authority does it have?

[Q] For you, what are the implications for knowing and believing God's Word? Be specific.

"Corban" in Mark 7:11

The Pharisees had a regulation that something declared "Corban" meant it was dedicated to God, and no longer able to be given to another purpose, such as caring for one's parents.

[Q] How does Jesus show the Pharisees twisted the law?

[Q] What does Jesus reveal about their motives?

What makes us unclean spiritually? | Read Mark 7:14-23.

Jesus get very radical now by saying spiritual uncleanness comes from within, not from without. This was revolutionary for the Jews, but it can be difficult even today for people who believe humankind is intrinsically good.

[Q] Like the Pharisees, how could we use overly scrupulous dietary regulations to avoid more important issues of the heart?

What other outward acts could we do to disguise inward uncleanness?

[Q] Give an example of how we try to blame external influences for sin instead of dealing with our own wrong motive or attitude.

How do I get clean?

At this point in Mark, Jesus does not offer any solution to the problem of uncleanness. From other Scriptures we find the solution and discover there is nothing we can do to make ourselves acceptable to God.

[Q] How does Jesus give us new hearts that are clean before God? What cleanses us? (See Hebrews 9:11-14.)

Jesus did this “once for all ... to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (Hebrews 9:26)

Apply | Read 1 John 1:8-9.

In Scripture, the *heart* refers to the inner person, mind, will and emotions. When it comes to God’s commands, the heart is the important thing.

- Take some time to ask the Lord to give you a clean heart. If there are any specific sin areas, ask Him to forgive, cleanse and give you strength and wisdom to overcome.
- Ask Him for a trusted friend who can pray with you and encourage you as you pursue heart transformation in these areas.

Pray
