



DIVE DEEPER

READ Mark 7:1-23 (NIV)

The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus 2 and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. 3 (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. 4 When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.) 5 So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?”

6 He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

7 They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.’ 8 You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.” 9 And he continued, “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! 10 For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and, ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’ 11 But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God)— 12 then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. 13 Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.” 14 Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. 15 Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them.” [16]

17 After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. 18 “Are you so dull?” he asked. “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? 19 For it doesn’t go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.) 20 He went on: “What comes out of a person is what defiles them. 21 For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, 22 adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. 23 All these evils come from inside and defile a person.”

THAT WHICH DEFILES:

› (V. 2) **Eating food with hands that were *defiled*, that is, unwashed.** Originally κοινος [koinos] meant what was common to everybody like the Koiné Greek. But in later Greek it came also to mean as here what is vulgar or profane. (Many think that the disciples were seen here eating some of the bread preserved in the twelve baskets the afternoon before across the lake.

› (V. 3) **A ceremonial washing.** The washing is done with the clenched fist. The individual rubs one hand and the arm up to the elbow with the other hand clenched. He rubs the palm of one hand with the other closed, so as to make sure that the part that touched the food would be clean.

YES • NO • MAYBE

1. I’m more comfortable with doing new things than the people sitting next to me.
2. Traditions are important to me.
3. God doesn’t like traditions.
4. It is dangerous to base your beliefs on the previous generations’ teachings.
5. God doesn’t care about what you eat.



DIVE DEEPER (CONTINUED...)

› **(V. 3) Holding to the tradition of the elders.** “Tradition” is the translation of *paradosis* (παράδοσις) “to give into the hands of another, to deliver something to keep, use, take care of.” It refers to instructions handed down from one generation to another, which are to be observed by the succeeding generations. “Holding” is *krateō* (κρατέω) “to keep carefully and faithfully.”

¿ What does it tell you about God that Jesus did not carefully and faithfully keep the tradition of the elders?

› **(V. 6) You hypocrites.** Greek *hupocritēs* (ὑποκριτής). The word is made up of *hupo* (ὑπο) “under,” and *krinō* (κρίνω) “to judge,” and referred originally to “one who judged from under the cover of a mask,” thus, assuming an identity and a character which he was not. This person was the actor on the Greek stage.

› **(V. 11) Corban.** A gift or offering to God. The rabbis allowed the individual to keep whatever money should have been given by the son for the support of his parents, if he would declare it as a gift to God. He could keep the money and by merely speaking the word, justify his withholding it from his parents. The rabbis not only justified such a son’s trickery, but held that he was prohibited from using it for father or mother, but he might use it for himself.

¿ What does it say about the character of God that THIS is the first example of hypocrisy that Jesus mentions?

› **(V. 18) Are you so dull?** It was a discouraging moment for Jesus that his own disciples were still under the spell of the Pharisaic theological outlook. It was a riddle to them. “They had been trained in Judaism, in which the distinction between clean and unclean is ingrained, and could not understand a statement abrogating this” (Gould). They had noticed that the Pharisees stumbled at the parable of Jesus (Matt. 15:12). They were stumbling themselves and did not know how to answer the Pharisees.

¿ Jesus charges the disciples with intellectual dullness and spiritual stupidity. How do we still struggle in our understanding of what God really wants?

NOTES

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MY PRAYER

1. How much am I just following what other people believe?
2. What do I need to do to honor God more than just following the crowd?
3. What new thing does God need me to know about His character this week?