

# Jesus Teaches About Inner Purity Mark 7:1-23

by David Servant

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*David Servant explores Jesus' teachings on inner purity, emphasizing the importance of spiritual integrity over mere adherence to traditions and dietary laws.*

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 16:7, Matthew 15:3, Matthew 23:23, Mark 7:8, Luke 11:42, Romans 14:17, 1 Corinthians 6:19, Galatians 5:1, Colossians 2:8

**Topics:** "Inner Purity", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

David Servant preaches about the danger of exalting man-made traditions above God's laws, using the example of the Pharisees who prioritized their traditions over God's commandments, leading to disobedience and hypocrisy. He highlights how some churches today fall into the same trap, focusing on rituals and traditions while neglecting true repentance and following Jesus. Jesus emphasized that what truly matters to God is a person's actions and words, not external practices like dietary restrictions. He urges Christians to prioritize spiritual growth and obedience to God's standards of holiness over man-made rules and traditions.

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## Transcript

Has your mother taught you to wash your hands before you eat? Now you can tell her that Jesus is against her rule, right? Wrong! The Pharisees washed their hands before eating, but not to cleanse themselves of germs, because they didn't know about germs two thousand years ago. They washed their hands to obey their tradition, believing that if they ate with unwashed hands, they would become defiled and unacceptable to God. That small error in their thinking wouldn't have been so bad, except that their misconception about what made them acceptable or unacceptable to God extended much farther. Some of the traditions they kept actually violated God's Word. Thus, as Jesus said, they rejected God's specific laws and substituted their own traditions. Obeying man-made rules, they disobeyed God's rules.

One example of this was their breaking of the fifth commandment: "Honor your father and mother." The Pharisees taught that a person didn't have to help his needy parents if he vowed to give his money to God. Because they were lovers of money (see Luke 16:14), this tradition was probably designed to increase their own personal wealth. The Pharisees wouldn't have to spend their money supporting their elderly parents, plus, other people vowed to give their money to the Pharisees to support "God's work" rather than help their parents. This was just one of many examples of how the Pharisees broke God's law in order to protect their own traditions.

Many churches today are guilty of this same sin---exalting their own traditions above God's laws. As a result, people who keep the traditions think they're acceptable to God, even though they break many of His commandments. They attend church every week, say the right things at the right times during the service, receive communion, and think that makes them acceptable to God. But the rest of the week, they lie, steal and take God's name in vain. They're full of lust, hatred and pride. And just like the Pharisees, they'll spend eternity in hell unless they come to their senses, truly repent and begin to follow Jesus. When they do, their lives will change dramatically.

Jesus went on to explain that what a person eats is not what makes him acceptable or unacceptable to God. It is what a person does and says. Unfortunately, even some Christians have fallen into deception in this regard, over-emphasizing the importance of what we eat, and sometimes even claiming that we must follow the dietary laws of the Old Testament. Thinking they are more pleasing to God, they look down on other Christians who don't also restrict their diets. But today we read that Jesus declared that every kind of food is acceptable to eat (see Mark 7:19). Let's be careful that we don't become sidetracked by minor things. God wants His people to live according to His, not our, standards of holiness.

Q. Because Jesus declared all foods are acceptable for us to eat, does that mean it would be OK for us to subsist on a diet of candy bars and Cokes?

A. When Jesus lived on the earth, there were no such things as candy bars and Cokes. In fact, there were not any foods that were processed like the many foods available to us today. In their natural state as God created them, all foods are acceptable for us to eat and contribute to our physical well-being. But foods that have been altered and stripped of their nutritional value are in a different category. There are many nutrients that are essential for our bodies to remain healthy, and a wise Christian will see that his diet contains all the nutrients he needs.

Q. Have you ever met someone who thinks they're holier than you because they keep certain rules that can't be found anywhere in the Bible? What do you think Jesus would say to them?

Application: Like the people in yesterday's reading, the Pharisees of today's reading were more concerned with physical rather than spiritual things, and concentrated more on external rather than internal things. Without neglecting the physical and external, God wants us to be more concerned about the spiritual and internal.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-servant/jesus-teaches-about-inner-purity-mark-71-23/>

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