



Mark: Following Jesus Immediately- Doctrine & Defilement

Introduction: We all want to fit in. That's true even in churches or religious environments. The problem that can arise is that sometimes the pressure to fit in, or the expectations, become so focused on external behavior that we pay no attention to the conditions of our heart. According to Jesus, our behaviors reflect the condition of our hearts-and the heart is His primary concern.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever done something and had someone say something to the effect of, "I didn't think you could do that if you were a Christian?" Most of us would agree that following Jesus will mean that our behavior will and should change, but what is the problem with focusing too much on behavior?
2. Read **Mark 7:1-5** Why are the Pharisees concerned about the disciples not washing their hands? Were the disciples breaking the OT Law? How can tradition be helpful and how can it be harmful?
3. Read **Mark 7:6-8** This quotation from Isaiah reveals at least 3 signs of hypocrisy. What are they? How can the way we worship actually be worthless or dangerous?
4. Read **Mark 7:14-23** Why were not only the Pharisees, but the people concerned or confused about outside things causing defilement? How can the things you say and do reveal the condition of your heart? How can some of the things we say and do mask the condition of our hearts? Is it possible to do good things yet have a heart that is "unclean?"
5. Jesus accuses the Pharisees of being hypocrites. What does he mean by that? What's the difference between someone doing something they know is wrong as a Christian (sin) and someone being a hypocrite?
6. How are some ways that we can pay attention to the conditions of our hearts?

Shaping Your Mind – Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. Prov. 4:23

Moving Forward – Remember that our hearts, are the heart of the matter.