

MARK 7:1-23

TRADITION OF MEN OR COMMAND OF GOD?

OUTSIDE-IN CLEANSING

1. Goal is morality (right behavior).
2. Cardinal virtues are moral behaviors.
3. Process includes:
 - Aim at the right goal
 - Determine the steps needed to achieve the goal.
 - Habitually practice the steps.

THE “CHRISTIAN MORALIST” CYCLE (Gal 3:3)

1. Failure

2. Guilt and shame

3. Neurotic self-talk

- “I should have kept the law of God.”
- “I can keep the law of God.”
- “I will try harder and do better next time.”

4. Plan to improve moral behavior

5. Act, then fail to act (start back at #1)

OUTSIDE-IN CLEANSING

1. Goal is morality (right behavior).
2. Cardinal virtues are moral behaviors.
3. Process includes:
 - Aim at the right goal
 - Determine the steps needed to achieve the goal.
 - Habitually practice the steps.
4. Change comes through discipline.
5. Formation occurs externally.

THE COMMAND OF GOD

“‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Jesus (Matt 22:37-40)

THE COMMAND OF GOD

“The life that is pleasing to God is not a series of religious duties. We have only one thing to do, namely, to experience a life of relationship and intimacy with God.”

Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*

INSIDE-OUT CLEANSING

1. Goal is God himself and his kingdom (Jn 17:3; Matt 6:33).
2. Virtues are the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23).
3. Process includes:
 - Focus on intimacy with God (goal).
 - Through the Spirit in conjunction with Scripture, determine the steps needed to cultivate intimacy with God (spiritual disciplines).
 - Habitually practice the steps in the power of the Spirit.

CHRIST-CENTERED CYCLE

1. Disobedience

2. Conviction

3. Christ-centered talk

- “I cannot deal with guilt and shame.”
- “I do not want to deal with guilt, shame, and failure.”
- “Only Christ can deal with this.”

4. Confession

5. Repentance and obedience in the power of the Spirit.

INSIDE-OUT CLEANSING

1. Goal is God himself and his kingdom (Jn 17:3; Matt 6:33).
2. Virtues are the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23).
3. Process includes:
 - Focus on intimacy with God (goal).
 - Through the Spirit in conjunction with Scripture, determine the steps needed to cultivate intimacy with God (spiritual disciplines).
 - Habitually practice the steps in the power of the Spirit.
4. Change comes as we habitually agree with the Spirit's work in our lives (Eph 4:30; 1 Thess 5:19).
5. Formation occurs in the heart.

A MEANS OF GRACE

(SEE HANDOUT)

A MEANS OF GRACE

“We do not want to be beginners. But let us be convinced of the fact that we will never be anything else but beginners, all our life.”

Thomas Merton, *Contemplative Prayer*

“There are no experts in the company of Jesus. We are all beginners, necessarily followers, because we don't know where we are going.”

Eugene Peterson, *The Jesus Way*

“Come to me . . . and learn.”

~ Jesus (Matt 11:28-29)



Small Group Discussion Questions
(Mark 7:1-37)
March 31, 2016

Allow each person in your group to answer one of the following questions:

- *What did you learn this week?*
 - *What are you going to do about it?*
 - *Who are you going to tell?*
1. The Jewish leaders of Jesus' day believed that if one followed their traditions regarding the Law then he would be acceptable to God. Tim Keller calls this "Outside-In Cleansing," or keeping a list of external acts in an attempt to show we are clean. What are some examples of people doing this today? Does this ever show up in your life, and if so, how? Does it work?
 2. How can keeping a "Christian" checklist reinforce this external righteousness? Keller describes this external righteousness as: "If I stay away from dirty movies and profane activities and bad people, if I pray and read my Bible, if I try really hard to be good, then God will see that I'm worthy and come in and heal my heart." (*Jesus the King* at 82) Do you ever find yourself thinking like this? What does Jesus say about this way of thinking?
 3. Is there anything we can do to make ourselves clean before God? What did Jesus do to make us clean before God? Have you ever recognized your absolute need for Jesus to make you clean and placed your trust in Him alone to do so? Do you continue to trust him on a moment-by-moment basis?
 4. How should we approach the spiritual disciplines? Are they there for us to keep a checklist, like the Pharisees, or are they a means of grace to cultivate a deeper intimacy with Jesus? Discuss a few practical steps you can take as a group to remind one another that those in Christ are already clean before God and that we practice the spiritual disciplines to know him more (Philippians 3:7-11).