**WHAT COMES OUT OF A PERSON IS WHAT DEFILES THEM**

Mark 7:14-23

Key Verse 7:20

He went on: “What comes out of a person is what defiles them

**Introduction**



In the previous passage, Jesus explained how the Pharisees’ hearts were not right with God. Their hearts were corrupted and they had no love of God in their hearts. They made use of the suffering people and they were destroying the work of God carried out by Jesus. By focusing on the outward appearance of things, the religious leaders were leading the people totally in the wrong direction. It was a grave sin before God’s sight. Jesus helped the Twelve to be purified according to the words of God and personal repentance rather than relying on the religious leaders.

1. Read verses 14-16. What did Jesus teach the crowd? (14, 15) What does and does not make a person unclean?

1-1, Read verses 14-16.

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] [[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+7&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24480f)]

1-2, What did Jesus teach the crowd? (14, 15)

***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.”***

* It seemed to the crowd that Jesus’ teaching was not matched with the book of Leviticus 11.

### ***Clean and Unclean Food***

***11 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 2 “Say to the Israelites: ‘Of all the animals that live on land, these are the ones you may eat: 3 You may eat any animal that has a divided hoof and that chews the cud.***

***4 “‘There are some that only chew the cud or only have a divided hoof, but you must not eat them. The camel, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is ceremonially unclean for you. 5 The hyrax, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean for you. 6 The rabbit, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean for you. 7 And the pig, though it has a divided hoof, does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you. 8 You must not eat their meat or touch their carcasses; they are unclean for you.***

***9 “‘Of all the creatures living in the water of the seas and the streams you may eat any that have fins and scales. 10 But all creatures in the seas or streams that do not have fins and scales—whether among all the swarming things or among all the other living creatures in the water—you are to regard as unclean. 11 And since you are to regard them as unclean, you must not eat their meat; you must regard their carcasses as unclean. 12 Anything living in the water that does not have fins and scales is to be regarded as unclean by you.***

***13 “‘These are the birds you are to regard as unclean and not eat because they are unclean: the eagle,[***[***a***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+11&version=NIV#fen-NIV-3011a)***] the vulture, the black vulture, 14 the red kite, any kind of black kite, 15 any kind of raven, 16 the horned owl, the screech owl, the gull, any kind of hawk, 17 the little owl, the cormorant, the great owl, 18 the white owl, the desert owl, the osprey, 19 the stork, any kind of heron, the hoopoe and the bat.***

***20 “‘All flying insects that walk on all fours are to be regarded as unclean by you. 21 There are, however, some flying insects that walk on all fours that you may eat: those that have jointed legs for hopping on the ground. 22 Of these you may eat any kind of locust, katydid, cricket or grasshopper. 23 But all other flying insects that have four legs you are to regard as unclean.***

***24 “‘You will make yourselves unclean by these; whoever touches their carcasses will be unclean till evening. 25 Whoever picks up one of their carcasses must wash their clothes, and they will be unclean till evening.***

***26 “‘Every animal that does not have a divided hoof or that does not chew the cud is unclean for you; whoever touches the carcass of any of them will be unclean. 27 Of all the animals that walk on all fours, those that walk on their paws are unclean for you; whoever touches their carcasses will be unclean till evening. 28 Anyone who picks up their carcasses must wash their clothes, and they will be unclean till evening. These animals are unclean for you.***

***29 “‘Of the animals that move along the ground, these are unclean for you: the weasel, the rat, any kind of great lizard, 30 the gecko, the monitor lizard, the wall lizard, the skink and the chameleon. 31 Of all those that move along the ground, these are unclean for you. Whoever touches them when they are dead will be unclean till evening. 32 When one of them dies and falls on something, that article, whatever its use, will be unclean, whether it is made of wood, cloth, hide or sackcloth. Put it in water; it will be unclean till evening, and then it will be clean. 33 If one of them falls into a clay pot, everything in it will be unclean, and you must break the pot. 34 Any food you are allowed to eat that has come into contact with water from any such pot is unclean, and any liquid that is drunk from such a pot is unclean. 35 Anything that one of their carcasses falls on becomes unclean; an oven or cooking pot must be broken up. They are unclean, and you are to regard them as unclean. 36 A spring, however, or a cistern for collecting water remains clean, but anyone who touches one of these carcasses is unclean. 37 If a carcass falls on any seeds that are to be planted, they remain clean. 38 But if water has been put on the seed and a carcass falls on it, it is unclean for you.***

***39 “‘If an animal that you are allowed to eat dies, anyone who touches its carcass will be unclean till evening. 40 Anyone who eats some of its carcass must wash their clothes, and they will be unclean till evening. Anyone who picks up the carcass must wash their clothes, and they will be unclean till evening.***

***41 “‘Every creature that moves along the ground is to be regarded as unclean; it is not to be eaten. 42 You are not to eat any creature that moves along the ground, whether it moves on its belly or walks on all fours or on many feet; it is unclean. 43 Do not defile yourselves by any of these creatures. Do not make yourselves unclean by means of them or be made unclean by them. 44 I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves along the ground. 45 I am the Lord, who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.***

***46 “‘These are the regulations concerning animals, birds, every living thing that moves about in the water and every creature that moves along the ground. 47 You must distinguish between the unclean and the clean, between living creatures that may be eaten and those that may not be eaten.’”***

* They could not take and swallow Jesus’ declaration. They thought, “Can even pork meat not defile us? No way!” Jesus’ teaching here was repulsive to them.
* Even Peter who initiated this book through his pen man John Mark was asked to eat what were considered to be unclean in the book of Acts. He rejected God’s command out of his old belief based on the old testament teachings.

1-3, What does and does not make a person unclean?

***15 Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them.”***

* This verse seems like Jesus’ human biology lesson 101. According to Jesus, no food that one eats can make a person defiled. Instead, what comes from within make a person defiled.
* There is nothing external that can make one unclean inside. What makes one unclean is what comes from within.

1. Read verses 17-19. What did the disciples ask Jesus about? (17) What was Jesus’ answer? (18, 19) How can we make our hearts clean? (1 Peter 1:23)

2-1, Read verses 17-19.

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.)

2-2, What did the disciples ask Jesus about? (17)

***17 After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable.***

* The disciples were spiritually dull enough to understand where Jesus was coming from as a shepherd. Jesus might have been glad when they asked about the meaning of the parable.

2-3, What was Jesus’ answer? (18, 19)

***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.)***

* Basically Jesus’ teaching here is the food that we eat or our hands that pick the food and put it into our mouth cannot make us defiled, because it go into our stomach not our heart and then out of the body.
* Even if we eat somewhat spoiled food our body has sort of self-cleaning ability. Our stomach does not hold spoiled food but quickly throw it out of the body through vomiting or diarrhea.
* Likewise, when we eat unclean food, we may get a stomachache but the bad food eventually comes out of our body. The point is that it is not so serious compared to evil thoughts in our hearts.

2-4, How can we make our hearts clean? (1 Peter 1:23)

*22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. 23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. (1 Peter 1:22-23)*

*Sanctify them by[*[*d*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26777d)*] the truth; your word is truth. (John 17:17)*

* When Jesus called his Twelve to be with Jesus in the beginning of His ministry, he must have in mind that they would be sanctified with the truth and by obeying His words.
* Jesus helped them to know who Jesus is. Sooner or later, they would confess that Jesus is the Christ in chapter 8.
* Peter came to know who Jesus is and in this book, he illustrated how he built up his faith and in his later book, 1 Peter, he testified how he was purified by the word of Jesus.
* He chose to stay with Jesus because of His eternal word in John 6 when the crowd and other uncommitted disciples left one by one. As a result of remaining in Jesus and His love and words, he was sanctified and purified.

1. Read verses 20-23. What defiles a person? (20) Describe each of the evil thoughts that defile a person. (21-23) What can we learn from Jesus who confronted the religious leaders?

3-1, Read verses 20-23.

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.”

3-2, What defiles a person? (20)

***20 He went on: “What comes out of a person is what defiles them.***

* What defiles us is what comes out of our hearts. Unlike our body, our heart does not have self-cleaning system.
* Jesus says that out of person’s heart evil thoughts comes. Our heart contains our thoughts.
* In our hearts, we can have the thoughts of loving God and loving others. In our heart, we can also have evil and sinful thoughts.
* So we have to examine our hearts. How? We must check our thought for which we spend our time most in our daily life.
* Our thought reflects our heart condition. Pleasure-seeking people think of having fun in their heart all the time.

3-3, Describe each of the evil thoughts that defile a person. (21-23)

***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.”***

* Here 12 evil thoughts exposes what kind of evil our hearts have. We don’t need to travel a long distance to find them. We don’t need to conduct an exhaustive search. All you need to do is look at your own heart and let Jesus’ light shine on our hearts. (Ephesians 5:14)

* Sexually immoral people spent lots of time for sexual thinking. On the other hand those who want to love God think all the time how to honor him and please him.
* Those who have shepherd heart think how to serve their Bible students and pray for them. But according to Jesus, human hearts are corrupt and filthy.
* So out of our heart, all kinds of evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these sins come from our heart.
* Our heart is like a factory to produce sin every day, every hour. That’s why Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure…”
* The problem is that God is holy and abhors wickedness and sins. To have a right relationship with God, God’s people should first wash their filthy and sinful heart.
* More specifically, God’s people should have clean and spiritual thoughts. Again, how then can we have such thoughts? How can we have pure and godly heart?
* But we better go back to the Bible and remember what our original was. In Genesis 1, God created man in his own image. Man was innocent in heart. He was a decent human being.
* But since the Fall of man, his heart was corrupted by sinful thoughts. Genesis 6:5 says “The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.”

* Man’s heart became a source of many evil things. The Lord was grieved and his heart was filled with pain. But in his mercy, God did not abandon man.
* He sent his one and only Son Jesus to save the sinful humanity. He opened the way for our hearts to be purified: the blood of Jesus Christ can wash away all our sins and make us new persons.
* We cannot wash our dirty hearts with human ways. Again only the blood of Jesus can make us clean before God’s eyes.
* This is a promise we find 1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”
* We have a tendency to be habitual. It is comfortable for us to maintain status quo. So many people today follow traditions and worldly trend like dead fish flowing down the stream.
* But we learn today that God’s people must live according to the word of God. We must fill our hearts with the word of truth so that we may love God with all our hearts and serve him from our hearts.

Psalm 119:9 says,

“How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word.”

3-4, What can we learn from Jesus who confronted the religious leaders?

* Only when we live according to God’s word our heart can be clean and pure. Christians are those who are continually sanctified with the words of God.
* Our hearts are Christ’s dwelling place. Ephesians 3:16-17 says, “I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.”
* Let us wash our dirty hearts through repentance before God and receive Jesus’ precious blood that washes away our sins. Let us live according to God’s life-giving words that cleanse our heart and grow us in his purity.
* This passage may remind us of Psalm 51:1-10 written by a king David who repented of his grace sins of adultery and murder in regards to Uriah and his wife.

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.* ***2*** *Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.* ***3*** *For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.* ***4*** *Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge.* ***5*** *Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.* ***6*** *Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place.* ***7*** *Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.* ***8*** *Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.* ***9*** *Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.* ***10*** *Create in me a pure heart, O God,*

**Conclusion**

Today we learned that what God wants for us is to have a pure and clean heart. Traditions are not God’s words but rules made by men. They have no power to save and change our hearts. Only Jesus’ blood and his word have power to change our hearts and transform us so that we may be new creation in Christ. Then we can worship and love God with a pure heart and grow as men and women after God’s own heart. May God give each one of us a desire to have a clean heart before him so that our thoughts, words and actions may please and glorify him.

**One word: Create in me a pure heart!**