

## A Heart for God vs. Human Traditions – Leader’s Notes

Mark 7:5-16

**Background:** The Jews had been taught that keeping the Law was the key to honoring God. The problem is they made their rituals and traditions – keeping up appearances – more important than having a heart for God and following His will. [Another example of this is in I Samuel 15:13-33, where King Saul disobeyed God to “sacrifice \(worship\) to the Lord”](#). As a result, Jesus called the Pharisees “hypocrites” (literally: play actors). They acted like they were devoted to God, but their hearts were far from Him.

### Discussion:

1. Dietary laws and ceremonial washing were healthy. Why did Jesus say the Pharisees and teachers of the Law were being hypocritical when they challenged the disciples for eating with unclean hands? (See Isaiah 29:13) [For one, they were looking for a way to accuse Jesus and His followers of failing to keep the Law – they weren’t truly concerned about their being righteous \(living rightly before God\). They also found comfort in looking good in the eyes of others. They did this by creating laws, then working hard to keep them. “The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” \(I Samuel 16:7\).](#)
2. Read Romans 12:1-2 and John 4:23-24. How would you define *spiritual worship*? [Answers may vary. Essentially, it is worshiping God from our hearts, being led by the Holy Spirit.](#)
3. God is always creating new pathways for reaching people with the gospel. Does this mean we might have to leave the comfort of our traditions? [Yes, it does. God’s priority is to bring us into relationship with Him, and He does whatever it takes to accomplish this. If we are closed to new ways of presenting the gospel, we may find ourselves resisting God.](#)
4. *Corban* (also written *qorban*) indicated when something was dedicated to God (though it could be used in any way a person chose). A Jew could appease his conscience of not caring for his parents by stating that his available resources are dedicated to God. Which takes precedence: human laws and traditions or God’s call to honor our parents? Why? [The 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment clearly states we are to honor our parents. Human laws are always subordinate to God’s laws.](#)
5. What was the purpose in vs. 14-16? [Jesus emphasized that our relationship with Him begins in our hearts. Treasuring God in our hearts is foundational.](#)

6. What's the key to developing a true heart of worship? *Answers will vary.* Having a heart that is submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and recognizing that all we are and have is a gift from Him, leads us to a heart of gratitude and adoration.