

Community Group Study Guide

For the week of February 17, 2019

MY STORY

1. What family tradition did you observe as a child, still do, and hope to see carried on in the next generation?

2. Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there a particular point, verse or comment that caught your attention, challenged you or raised a question?

DIGGING DEEPER

After reading the passage, discuss the following questions.

Mark 7:1-23 New International Version (NIV)

7 The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus 2 and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. 3 (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. 4 When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.

5 So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?"

6 He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

*“These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.*

7

*They worship me in vain;
their teachings are merely human rules.’*

8 *You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.”*

9 *And he continued, “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! **10** For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and, ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’ **11** But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God)— **12** then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. **13** Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”*

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]***

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.)*

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.”*

1. Jesus addresses three groups in the above passage; Pharisees and teachers, the crowd, and the disciples. Discuss what the issue debated by the Pharisees and Jesus. Given this debate, how would each define what it means to be spiritual?

- Pharisees & teachers

- The crowd

- The disciples

2. How does Jesus' idea of being unclean differ from that of the Pharisees? Why doesn't Jesus offer any solution to the problem at this time?

The following passage is the only recorded instance of our Lord actually leaving Palestine. He was practicing what he had just taught the disciples: there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, for all are sinners and are in need of a Savior. Jesus came to this area (about 40 miles from Capernaum) so that He might have some privacy, but a worried mother came to Him for help. Read the passage below and then discuss the questions.

Mark 7:24-30 New International Version (NIV)

24 Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. **25** In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an impure spirit came and fell at his feet. **26** The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.

27 “First let the children eat all they want,” he told her, “for it is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.”

28 “Lord,” she replied, “even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.”

29 Then he told her, “For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter.”

30 She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

1. How do you think Jesus’ accusers at the beginning of Mark 7 would have viewed his trip to this area?

2. Were Jesus’ words overly harsh in your opinion? What message is Jesus giving by this healing?

The region of Decapolis (ten cities) was also Gentile territory. By now, word of mouth had caused crowds of people to follow Jesus everywhere He went bringing with them people who were ill or handicapped. Even though Jesus was trying to enjoy some rest.

Mark 7:31-37 New International Version (NIV)

31 Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis. **32** There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged Jesus to place his hand on him.

33 After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue. **34** He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "Ephphatha!" (which means "Be opened!"). **35** At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.

36 Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. **37** People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

1. Why do you think Jesus used this method to heal the man?

2. Use your Bible to answer the following question. How is the response of these Gentiles (v. 37) like that of the Jews (Mark 1:27; 2:12) and the disciples (4:41)? What do you think was Mark's point in emphasizing this?

TAKING IT HOME

1. "These people honors Me with their lips their heart is far from Me." Mark 7:6 It is possible to have the image of being religious or spiritual, but actually be far from God. Which of the following may apply to you? How can your group pray for you as a result? (P.S. We often say "they" meaning someone else, however, its entirely possible that YOU are the "they"!)

- They attend church, *but their heart is far from Me.*
- They read their Bible, *but their heart is far from Me.*
- They pray eloquently, *but their heart is far from Me.*
- They contribute money, *but their heart is far from Me.*
- They do ministry, *but their heart is far from Me.*
- They love to sing, *but their heart is far from Me.*
- They talk to others about Jesus, *but their heart is far from Me.*
- They _____, *but their heart is far from Me.*

2. Jesus listed many things that can come out of someone's heart that indicate uncleanness (vv. 21-23). Which of these do you struggle with the most?

- Evil Thoughts (*Every outward act of sin is preceded by an inward act of choice*)
- Blasphemy (*Insulting man or God*)
- Adulteries (*This includes even looking at another person in a sexual manner, to include pornography*)

- Covetousness (*An example is to buy something you don't have the money for*)
- Deceit (*lying to get ahead or get out of trouble*)
- Pride (*thinking of yourself more than thinking of others*)
- Foolishness (*not obeying God because the foolish say there is no God or replace themselves as God of their life*)

3. What tangible thing could you do this quarter to reach out to someone who might feel like they are outside God's love?

4. What would you like Jesus to help you hear or say? How can the group be praying for you about this right now?

PRAYER REQUESTS

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

ATTENTION CG!!!!

Throughout the Bible, believers are called to humbly communicate, worship, and sincerely seek God's will through prayer. Sometimes, the most valuable thing we can do for a person is to pray for them. Actually, prayer is always the most significant, vital, imperative, essential, critical, crucial. . .take your pick!

The one thing prayer never is, is a waste. When we pray, something always happens. It is in this vein, that we are asking every Community Group to pray specifically over one of the 27 areas of our upcoming VBS.

You have been assigned to pray for *_(your leader will tell you now)_*. As you and your group members pray for this group, you will be receiving updates of how to specifically pray for them and even later, pray for them by name.

It is the hope of STF, that as we offer our time and mental and emotional investment to God in prayer, that we will see the blessing of being allowed to contribute to this vital mission our church has in reaching kids for the gospel of Christ in South Tampa. May we see hearts turned to Jesus, and a city radically changed as a result of our prayers!

Thanks for being part of STF.

WAYS TO SERVE

PB&J Ministry Homeless Outreach- Sun, Feb. 24th from 12:30-2 pm after church service at our Davis Islands Campus. All Campuses are welcome to join. This is a great opportunity to work together with "The City" college students and PB&J Ministry. The focus is building ongoing relationships with our homeless community and to share (PB&J) Prayer, Blessings, & Jesus with them.