

Family Lesson 62

Principle: The outward appearance does not determine our standing before God. The condition of our heart does.

Bible Character(s): Jesus and the disciples

Scripture Reference: Mark 7:1-23

1. Worship - Gather your family and play the [worship video](#) found on the curriculum resource page. Have fun, sing loudly, and follow along with the motions!

2. Skit Video - Watch the [skit video](#) with your family to hear a special message about what you will be learning this weekend.

3. Bible Lesson - Read through the lesson with your family. The bold font is meant to be read aloud along with the Scripture references.

Bible Lesson

Last week, what did we learn about Jesus? (We learned that he is our provider.) **What did he give the disciples?** (Rest.) **What did he give the people?** (Bread and fish; they were hungry and he fed them.) **He gave them enough food from five loaves of bread and two fish to satisfy more than 5000 people! It seemed impossible, but Jesus could provide this food because everything is possible with God. We learned that we can trust God to take care of all our needs.**

Do you remember what a Pharisee is? (Allow responses.) **A Pharisee is a religious leader (similar to a pastor, priest, or elder) who focuses on following the rules or law. Today, we are going to see how Jesus responds to the Pharisees.**

Let's begin by reading the Bible in Mark 7 [NLT].

Mark 7:1-3,5

¹ One day some Pharisees and teachers of religious law arrived from Jerusalem to

see Jesus. ² They noticed that some of his disciples failed to follow the Jewish ritual of hand washing before eating. ³ (The Jews, especially the Pharisees, do not eat until they have poured water over their cupped hands, as required by their ancient traditions.

⁵ So the Pharisees and teachers of religious law asked him, "Why don't your disciples follow our age-old tradition? They eat without first performing the hand-washing ceremony."

The Pharisees are trying to say that the disciples are wrong for not washing their hands. To them, this makes the disciples bad people. These washing rules weren't given to them by God, though. They were made by man. These rules are not bad things—it is always a good idea to wash your hands before you eat, but washing their hands does not change their hearts and make them right with God.

Let's continue reading the Bible to see how Jesus responds to the Pharisees.

Mark 7:6-8

⁶ Jesus replied, "You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote,

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

⁷ Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.'

⁸ For you ignore God's law and substitute your own tradition."

The Pharisees have made extra rules and added them to God's commands. They believe that following these rules makes them better people, or acceptable to God. Jesus says that the Pharisees look good on the outside because

they follow their rules, but he says, “Their hearts are far from me.” The Pharisees’ actions do not change them; it does not remove the sin from their hearts. Even though they try to obey all of the rules, they are not following and worshiping God. Their hearts are still sinful. Are the Pharisees following these rules to live for God? (Allow responses.) **No, they are following these rules for themselves, not because they want to bring God glory.**

God is interested in our hearts (our thoughts and the reasons we do things), **not just our actions.** **If you lie to your mom, will washing your hands make you feel any better about it? Will that take the lie away?** (Allow responses.) **No, washing our hands when we lie does nothing about the lie or the sin. We have to admit we are wrong and ask for forgiveness.**

Let’s continue reading the Bible.

Mark 7:14-15

¹⁴ Then Jesus called to the crowd to come and hear. “All of you listen,” he said, “and try to understand. ¹⁵ It’s not what goes into your body that defiles you; you are defiled by what comes from your heart.”

What does defile mean? (Allow responses.) **Defile means to make dirty.** Jesus explains to the people that it is the sin in our heart that makes us dirty. The food we eat does not make us dirty or sinful. It is the condition of our heart—which is shown in how we talk and act—that makes us sinful or dirty inside. Our actions and words show whether we are living for ourselves, or living to bring glory to God. Our hearts are unclean because of sin, but God sent Jesus to die as a sacrifice for our sin, so that our sinful hearts can be made clean through faith in him.

Let’s examine this further. Gather two plastic cups (not transparent or glass) and some food coloring. Fill both cups halfway with water. A parent should place a few drops of food coloring in one cup. Hold up the two cups and ask your child **which**

cup looks clean by looking at the outside? (Both.) Now allow your child to look inside the cup. **Which cup looks clean?** (Allow response.)

God cares about our heart, what’s on the inside, more than how we look on the outside. He cares about whether we live to bring him glory, or if we live for ourselves by choosing to do and say things because of how it will make us look to others. When we live for ourselves, we can look like we really love God and want to serve him, but our hearts are dirty with sin. We are really doing and saying things to give ourselves glory, not God. It’s kind of like the cup with dirty water inside of it. We can look clean on the outside, but we are dirty on the inside because of sin. How we look on the outside does not change how we look on the inside. Our actions, thoughts, and behaviors are what come from our heart, but they do not change our heart. When you put your faith and trust in Jesus, your heart is washed clean. You can live to bring glory to God by having a desire to love and serve him in all you do, instead of living for yourself.

Jesus said it is what comes from a person’s heart that makes them unclean. Our actions, what comes out of us, do not remove the sin from our hearts. The condition of our hearts shows in our actions and the choices we make. God is concerned with our hearts and the thoughts and motives behind what we choose to do. He wants to change our hearts. We can ask Jesus to change our hearts because he died for our sins. Jesus is the only one who can change our hearts and make them clean. When we have a clean heart, it shows in our actions and words. We make choices to do and say things because we love God and want to worship him.

The Lord sees our hearts when he looks at us. He is not concerned with what we look like or how many good things we do. He is concerned **with our hearts, with our thoughts and motives for why we live the way we do.** **When we put our faith and trust in Jesus, he changes our hearts so that we want to bring glory to him through**

the choices we make each day. We can make choices to say or do things to give God the glory. God knows the reasons behind the choices we make; he can see what is in our hearts. He knows if we are truly choosing to live for him or not.

Prayer

Spend a few minutes in prayer to close the lesson. Ask God to change our hearts, to give us a desire to follow him with happy hearts, to change us from the inside out.

Activity

Condition of the Heart

The purpose is to see that following rules and doing the right thing does not matter if we do not have the right attitude and motive.

Supplies:

[Sign with “selfish heart”](#)

[Sign with “serving heart”](#)

[Situations guide](#)

Place the “selfish heart” sign in one corner of your room, and the “serving heart” sign in the opposite corner of the room. Explain to your child that you will read through each situation and they are to go to the corner that shows the condition of the person’s heart. For the situations where the person’s heart is not in the right place, go to the “selfish heart” sign. For the scenarios where the person’s heart is in the right place, go to the “serving heart” sign. Also, ask your child what someone with a servant’s heart would do in the examples where the person’s heart is not in the right place.

God cares about the condition of our heart. Sometimes it can be hard to understand what this means. Some of the examples were not bad. The hard thing is to know when your heart is not right. You need to look at your attitude for why you choose to do or say things. Sometimes it is very clear that our attitudes are wrong. Sometimes you think you are doing the right thing, but your reason for doing it is wrong. Just doing the correct action does not make you a good person. God cares about your heart (your attitude, motives, and intentions.) When we grow closer to God through reading the Bible, praying, and spending time in community, God can show us the sinful attitudes that we have in our hearts.

