

Mark 7:1-23

A Clean Heart

“No person in the history of our planet has come close to obeying the whole law of God—except Jesus, who kept it perfectly... As the new Adam, it was His obligation to keep every jot and tittle of the law of God, and He did just that. However, He could not have cared less for human conventions. When Jesus saw a person suffering with leprosy, He touched him. When he saw a man who could not walk, He healed him, even though it was the Sabbath day. When he saw a man in the throes of demonic possession, screaming in a graveyard, He went into that place and cast out that evil spirit.

The major problem with legalism is that it is a subtle form of idolatry; it elevates that which is human above that which is divine. It substitutes human traditions, human policies, and human regulations for the very Word of God. Whenever we serve the creature rather than the Creator, we are involved in idolatry. The Pharisees and scribes thought they were the most righteous people on the face of the earth, but they were idolaters.” Sproul

- I. The Pharisees and teachers of the law’s assessment of Jesus was based on the religion they created through their own rules, regulations, and traditions. It was not in any way based on the Word of God, which Jesus kept perfectly throughout his time here on earth. His purpose was to fulfill the Law through his obedience, not abolish it (Matt 5:17). Anything that requires obedience to man’s religious rules, regulations and traditions is legalism. It replaces the infallible Word of God with the fallible word of man. It makes its followers into hypocrites who worship in vain. And it takes away from the power of grace by replacing it with works.

Mark 7:1-8

1 Jn. 2:28

Ex. 30:18-19

Isa. 39:15-16

ὑποκριτής *hypōkritēs*; an actor, stage player, a dissembler (phony), pretender, hypocrite

- II. To think that we have the power to nullify the Word of God by our actions is a scary thought. We have been given God's truth as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Ps. 119:105). Its power alone is to guide us through life. Adding anything to it, or subtracting from it to suit our religious convictions, is an affront to our Lord. Legalism systematically minimizes the impact of the Word of God on the hearts and lives of those who allow it to rule them more than the truth of the Scriptures.

Mark 7:9-15

Matt. 15:12-13

*"It is just as easy to destroy the authority of God's Word by addition as by subtraction, by burying it under man's inventions as by denying its truth. The whole Bible and nothing but the Bible, must be our rule of faith, nothing added and nothing taken away.
Ryken*

- III. The only means of cleansing the heart to enable us to have a right standing before God, is the blood of Jesus Christ. Nothing else has the cleansing power to do that. No rule, law, tradition, good work or noble intention can cleanse and keep the heart from the evil that makes it unclean. Once cleansed, the heart of a believer who has been saved by grace must never allow evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly to creep in and express itself. A love for Jesus and obedience to his Word alone, keeps the door of compromise closed and the heart alive in Christ.

Mark 7:17-23

Prov. 23:7

Ps. 4:18-29

Psalm 51:10-12 *10Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. 12Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*