

# Lesson 3 – March 15, 2020

## Mark 7:1-23

**Know Right:** Jesus teaches that a right attitude toward God is more important than traditions.

**Think Right:** “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”  
Micah 6:8

**Do Right:** I will ask Jesus to help me live humbly for God.

**Feel Right:** I can feel humble when Jesus helps me to live for God.

**How do we live a holy life, and is that even possible in the year 2020? Rather than evaluating whether you have checked the boxes of holiness (such as by tithing or volunteering), spend time this week examining your heart. When we live humbly for God, we naturally grow in holiness as the fruit of the Spirit shines through our lives. And instead of looking down on the “less holy” around us, we can see others through God’s eyes and love as He loves.**

### Discover Time: Breaking with tradition

**Goal:** To help students give up **traditions** and **humbly** follow a new plan.

#### Play-Doh Station

##### **Supplies:**

- Four colors of Play-Doh: green, red, yellow and white (one small piece of each color per student)
- Tracker Tickets

##### **Instructions for the DT Leader:**

1. Have students sit at the tables. Give each student one piece of each color of Play-Doh.
2. Say: Today we are going to play a game, but you are going to need to listen very carefully. I am going to give you instructions to make Play-Doh items, but not the **traditional** way (the way you might be used to making them). You will need to **humbly** follow my instructions, even if they sound strange.
3. Inform students that the two students who **humbly** follow the non-**traditional** instructions best will get five Tracker Tickets each.
4. Have students make shapes using non-**traditional** colors: a green star, a red cloud, a yellow heart, a white tree, etc. For example, “First we’re going to make a star. To make the star, pick up the green Play-Doh. Make it into a star shape.”
5. Listen for students who point out that the colors are wrong, and remind them to **humbly** follow instructions, even though the colors are not the **traditional** colors (or the colors they are used to).
6. Continue making shapes in non-**traditional** colors until DT is nearly over.
7. At the end of DT, award five Tracker Tickets to the two students who **humbly** followed instructions the best.

## Preparation for the Classroom

**Pray:** Pray specifically that parents will make it a priority to put God first in their homes this week. Pray that parents will walk humbly with the one true God as they grow in holiness.

**Read:** Mark 7:1-23

**Know Right: Jesus teaches that a right attitude toward God is more important than traditions**

The Jewish leaders rejected Jesus because He healed people on the Sabbath, and His disciples failed to follow the rigid Jewish traditions, such as the ceremonial washing of hands. But the rules Jesus and His disciples broke were not scriptural, they were man-made traditions. Jesus pointed out their hypocrisy and explained that it is not the specific rules people follow that make them grow in holiness, rather it is a correct attitude toward God. The sins we've committed can only be washed away by the purity of Jesus' blood, and we can only grow in holiness by living humbly for God.

**Lead Teacher's Notes:**

- The "holiness" mentioned in this lesson refers to *sanctification*, not *justification*. That is, we are referring to becoming more like Jesus (green page of the Wordless Book), not getting saved (white page of the Wordless Book).
  - Sanctification: being made holy (This is the gradual process by which a saved person becomes more like Jesus, growing in holiness and overcoming sin.)
  - Justification: being made right with God (This is the one-time event during which a person accepts Jesus as their Savior, and their sins are washed away.)
- This lesson covers a difficult but short passage of Scripture that may be dramatically read in full, with additional teacher commentary, questions, and answers in between the verse passages.
- Even though this is a difficult lesson to teach, be assured that it is very applicable to the students in your class. Most students know someone who believes that certain rituals or traditions will help them get to heaven: baptism, prayer rituals, attending church, good deeds, etc. Our goal is to teach students how to respond in humility so they can lead with love and guide others toward a genuine saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

**Creative Ideas for the Lesson:**

1. Box props! Set five boxes on your table and under each box have objects that represent traditions that some people believe will help them earn their salvation: a pile of fake money, calendar and a church building (regular church attendance), a basket of food (giving to the needy), a lanyard (volunteering at church), and a small tub of water with a small doll (baptism). Reveal the traditions at the appropriate time in your lesson.
2. Wax museum! As you teach the lesson, bring people to the front of your class and turn them into "wax mannequins" so you can shape and move them. Have one person be Jesus, two others to be Pharisees, and one a disciple. Shape the Pharisees' fingers to be pointing at the disciple with a face of frustration. As you teach, add props to the Pharisees to show the "weight" of traditions; such as food, washcloth (unwashed hands), cups, pitchers, etc. As you present the Gospel, take off the traditions and lay them by the foot of a cross to remind students that it is not by works, but by faith alone in Jesus.

## Lesson Introduction for the Classroom

**Lead Teachers ~ Connecting the DT to the Lesson:**

Did you see the "inspectors" walking around during Discover Time today? What were they up to? They looked official, but they seemed very concerned about the little things, like how many minutes you read your Bible each day, or

whether our DT was “holy” enough for God’s house. What kind of rules were they wanting us to follow? Who made up those rules? Hmm...strange...let’s see if our lesson can help us figure out what that was all about.

**If your Discover Time was in the Mission Station:** *Emphasize how missionaries have to give up many of their normal ways of doing things when they move to a new country, but that they are willing to give up their traditions and live humbly for God in order to help people learn about Jesus.*

**Pray:** Let’s stop and pray that God teaches us something new that we can apply to our lives today.

**Find It:** Our lesson is found in the New Testament in the book of Mark, chapter 7 (the big number in your Bible), verses 1-23 (the little numbers in your Bible).

**Timeline:** Today we will continue studying the life of Jesus. *Point to the timeline.*

### **Introduction to the Bible Lesson:**

In spite of all the amazing miracles Jesus did, most of the Jews chose not to believe that Jesus was God’s Son. If the Jewish leaders admitted that Jesus was God’s Son, people would start listening to Jesus and stop listening to them and obeying their man-made traditions. Then they wouldn’t seem so important anymore. What is it called when we want people to think we are important? (Pride) The people who did believe in Jesus were humble enough to give up their own way of life and live humbly for God.

In order to hold on to their high positions, the Jewish leaders kept trying to catch Jesus doing something wrong. They figured if they caught Jesus doing something wrong, they could show the people that Jesus wasn’t who He said He was. But there was a problem with that - Jesus never did anything wrong, and Jesus **is** who He says He is. He **is** God’s Son, and He **is** the Savior of the world!

## **Scripture Outline for the Classroom**

### **Mark 7:1-23**

#### **Jewish leaders question Jesus about hand washing**

##### **Read Mark 7:1-5**

**Recap:** What’s the big deal about eating with unwashed hands? Of course, you might eat some germs and dirt along with your food, but do you think that’s a sin? (No) It’s a good idea to wash your hands, but it’s a man-made rule. Do you remember when God gave Moses and the Israelites the Ten Commandments? *Point this out on your Bible timeline.*

God gave these laws so the Israelites would know how to live for Him. If they humbly followed His instructions, they would grow to be more holy, like God is holy. Living a holy life means you humbly live God’s way, not your own way. If they lived holy lives, then God promised to give them many blessings. Then the people who lived in other countries could see that Israel’s God was the real God, and they would make Him their God, too!

But the leaders added new rules and routines to God’s laws. When people have a certain way they always do things, or a man-made rule they follow, this is called a “tradition.” God didn’t make these traditions, people did. The Pharisees had so many of them, they were very hard to follow. One tradition was that people’s hands had to be washed in a special way before they ate. If they didn’t follow this man-made rule, the Jewish leaders said they were breaking God’s law. When you break God’s laws, it’s called sin. When Jesus’ disciples ate without doing the traditional handwashing, the Jewish leaders accused them of breaking God’s law. But was that really a sin? (No)

Even today, some religions teach that people must follow man-made laws to be holy, such as eating certain foods or wearing certain clothes. While some traditions can help us be more like Jesus - such as reading a chapter of the Bible every day - traditions can never save us. Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us that we are saved by grace, not by doing good things. *Read or recite Ephesians 2:8-9.* While it is good to be careful about what we eat or what we wear, these things don't save us. And our attitude before God is much more important than what traditions we follow! *Refer to the Discover Time activity.*

Let's see what Jesus said to the men who looked down on others for not following these traditions.

### **Jesus calls the Jewish leaders hypocrites**

#### **Read Mark 7:6-8**

**Recap:** Jesus called the Jewish teachers and the Pharisees "hypocrites." A hypocrite is someone who acts like they are doing the right thing, but their attitude is all wrong. On the outside, they might look like they live a holy life, but on the inside, they don't love God.

Suppose someone in our class is also in your class at school. At church they sing, and they answer questions in class, and they act like they live God's way. But when they are at school, they use bad words, talk about bad things, and watch bad things on the internet. Would that person be a hypocrite? (Yes)

Do you ever do anything like that? Do you act like you're a Christian at church, but in your neighborhood or at school, you do things your own way instead of God's way? That's being a hypocrite.

These Jewish leaders weren't living God's way. They weren't being humble; they were being prideful. They thought they were better than other people. But they were really living their own way, **and** they were making it hard for others to humbly live God's way.

Jesus gave them a perfect example of something they didn't do God's way. Let's read about it.

### **Jesus gives examples of hypocrisy**

#### **Paraphrase of Mark 7:9-13:**

Jesus explained how the Jewish leaders were hypocrites. God tells us to honor our father and mother. One way to honor our father and mother is to take good care of them, especially when they get old. But guess what one of the Jewish leaders' rules was? They said that people didn't have to use their money to take care of their mom and dad; they could give it to church instead of taking care of their parents. They'd say they were giving their money to God to get out of taking care of their parents. This man-made rule went against what God said. Jesus wanted the people to know the truth, so He called people to come listen to Him. Let's see what He taught them.

### **Jesus explains what makes people unclean**

#### **Paraphrase of Mark 7:14-23:**

Jesus taught the people that it's not what you put into your body, like food or dirt, that keeps you from being clean and holy. The dirty part of people is our sinful nature. We want to do things our own way - follow our own "traditions" - instead of humbly doing things God's way. Remember our lesson about John the Baptist? We learned that life is "not about me, it's all about God." Those of us who believe in Jesus as our Savior should be willing to give up our way - our traditions - and humbly live our lives His way. He is the only one who can help us grow to be more holy.

## **Gospel**

But what if you have never asked Jesus to be your Savior? Can you still grow in holiness? Unfortunately, the answer is no. The only way to grow in holiness and become more like Jesus is to first humbly admit that you are a sinner and that you need Jesus to forgive you. But you can do that today! *Share the Gospel using the Wordless Book and give an invitation for salvation.*

## **Conclusion:**

Jesus taught the Jewish people that their traditions were not the way to heaven. Following man-made rules and traditions is not the most important thing. It's not what God is focused on, and it's not what we need to be focused on - in our lives or in the lives of the people around us. How can we live holy lives, then? Micah 6:8 teaches us the answer. *Read Micah 6:8 out loud.* To "act justly" means to do our best to follow God's rules - the ones from the Bible, not the ones people made up. To "love mercy" means to be kind and loving to others, even when they are not very "holy." And to "walk humbly with God" means that God wants us to do these things with the right attitude.

## **Do Right and Feel Right:**

Sometimes people might have religious traditions, such as reciting prayers or giving a specific amount of money to the church. But, as Christians, we shouldn't follow man-made religious traditions or try to be holy to earn our way to heaven - believing in Jesus is the only way, and nothing we can do can earn us a ticket to heaven. But because we love Him, we want to do what is right. Our job is not to go around telling people they are wrong, like the Pharisees did. Our job is just what we talked about in Micah 6:8. *Read the verse again.* We want to do our best to obey what God teaches us in the Bible, show God's love to others even when they are not doing the right thing. And when Jesus helps us to live this way, we can feel humble as we remember that only God is 100% holy.

## **Review Questions: What did you discover today?**

1. What is a tradition? (A man-made rule or a special way someone always does things)
2. Can following traditions very carefully help a person get to heaven? (No)
3. What word describes the result of growing to be more like Jesus? (Holiness)
4. What does it mean to be a hypocrite? (To pretend like you're living God's way when you're really not)
5. What kind of attitude does God want us to have as we try to become more like Jesus? (Humble)
6. When people around us are not following our traditions, or even when they are sinning, should we go around pointing out all their mistakes? (No, we should show them mercy/Jesus' love)
7. What are some good traditions we can have that will help us grow in holiness? (Read the Bible, pray before eating, come to church every week, etc.)