

Sunday, Aug 23

notes

Tradition trumping God.

¹⁴After He called the crowd to Him again, He began saying to them, "Listen to Me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵there is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man. ¹⁶[If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.]"

notes

Our issue is not the behavior; it's the root.

¹⁷When he had left the crowd and entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the parable. ¹⁸And He said to them, "Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from the outside cannot defile him, ¹⁹because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?" (Thus He declared all foods clean). ²⁰And He was saying, "That which proceed out of the man, that is what defiles the man. ²¹For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, ²²deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. ²³All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."

The heart of the matter is the heart.

heart -- inner person-- center of our thoughts, will, emotions, passions, desires.

What does the Bible actually say?

"The heart is deceitful..." (Mark 7:23, Jeremiah 17:9, Matthew 5)

"I will give you a new heart..." (Ezekiel 36:26)

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart..." (Matthew 22:37)

"Guard your heart..." (Proverbs 4:23)

Pastor Eric Geiger, Mariners Church

Guard your Playlist -- who you listen to.

Guard your Playground -- where you go.

Guard who you play with -- who you spend time with.

Jeremiah 17:9 NASB- "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"

Ezekiel 36:26 NASB - Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

Matthew 22:37 NASB- And He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

Proverbs 4:23 NIV - Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Does the Bible Actually Say?

GateWay Church of Visalia, Pastor Lance Ainsworth

Mark 7:1-23, August 20th & 23rd, 2026

Follow your heart.

Prayer Requests:

Group Discussion: Where is your favorite place to pray?

Read Aloud: Mark 7:1-23

1. How can religious traditions become more important to us than God's actual commands? What are some ways in culture people elevate what we've always done above what God's Word actually says?
2. What does Jesus' list in verses 21–22 reveal about the condition of the human heart? Why is it easier to focus on someone's outward behavior than to address the condition of the heart? Which is harder to change: behavior or desire? Why? What does this passage teach us about where sinful behavior ultimately comes from?
3. Ezekiel 36:26 says God gives His people a “new heart.” What do you think God is promising to change? Why do you think we need a new heart rather than simply better rules or stronger self- discipline? Jesus says we are to love God with all our heart (Matthew 22:37). If the heart can deceive us, what does it mean to rightly direct our heart toward God? Proverbs 4:23 tells us to “guard your heart.” What are some practical ways we can do that?