



## What an Ugly Mug

Adapted from “Stumbling Blocks” series by Dennis Marquardt

Dennis Marquardt’s son, Jeremy, often came in from playing outside to eat supper with mud all over him. His hands were incredibly dirty but he sat ready to eat. Then the strangest thing would happen, he would ask for a clean spoon for dessert because the one he used for his dinner had food particles still on it; all the while ignoring his own dirty hands.

Spiritually, how like this are we? We are concerned about some speck of dirt on some outward action of someone else, while failing to notice the dirty hands we have ourselves. It is an easy error in which to fall prey. The Pharisees and Scribes had already done this with their hearts; they were like cups that were washed on the outside but dirty inside.

This is unappetizing to God and to mankind. Just as it is unappetizing to you to go to a restaurant, finish your soup, and then finding dirt or old food stuck to the bottom of the bowl. You would find this offensive. And God finds this offensive in our lives. The Word of God teaches us that God is deeply concerned about who we are in our hearts, and not what we depict with our outward appearance.

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## COURAGE

**C1:** Man sees the outside, but God knows what is inside. Write down what God sees when He looks at your heart. How can you find the courage to honestly admit that you have an ugly mug and need it to be cleaned?

**C2:** Read and answer the following.

**Matthew 23:25–26 (ESV)** “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.”

**Luke 11:38–41 (ESV)** The Pharisee was astonished to see that he did not first wash before dinner. And the Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You fools! Did not he who made the outside make the inside also? But give as alms those things that are within, and behold, everything is clean for you.”

- What can you glean from these verses?
- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very much and 4 being not very much, rate yourself on how worried you are with your outward appearance rather than what is on the inside. Write out a plan to improve.
- How can you make sure your outward appearance matches how God wants our hearts?

**C3:** Jesus did not wash His Hands before He ate in order to begin a discussion about what was in the Pharisee’s heart. In the next thirty days, find three men and discuss this lesson. What did you glean?

## STRENGTH

**S1:** If you were to discuss with other men why they do not go to church, how many do you think would say that the reason is that what is preached from the pulpit is not what is lived during the week? For the next fifteen days, ask the unchurched around you this question. Did their response match what you thought? What can you glean?

**S2:** Read and answer the following.

**Matthew 23:25–26 (ESV)**

**Luke 11:38–41 (ESV)**

- What can you glean from these verses?
- Describe a time in your life when you have been more concerned with your outward cleanliness rather than your inward cleanliness.
- Describe a time in your life when you were more concerned over the speck in someone else's eye rather than the log in your own eye.

**S3:** In the next thirty days, spend fifteen minutes a day asking the Holy Spirit to reveal anything that is ugly on the inside of you. Write down what you sense the Holy Spirit speaking to you. What did you glean?

## ENDURANCE

**E1:** Describe a time in your life when you have done something for Christ with an improper motive.

**E2:** Read and answer the following.

**Matthew 23:25–26 (ESV)**

**Luke 11:38–41 (ESV)**

- From these scriptures, what should be the source of your outward actions?
- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, rate how well your heart and motives are in your actions. Write out a plan to improve.

**E3.** In the next thirty days, find three men with which you may discuss these verses. Also discuss how true Christianity starts from our heart and not from what we do. What did you glean from these conversations?

**E4:** In the next thirty days, find three men and ask them to share their perception of your Christian walk based solely on your outward actions. How does their response line up with your inward motives? What did you glean from these conversations?