



Matthew 15:1-9 | Also found in Mark 7:1-13

¹ Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, ² “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands before they eat!” ³ Jesus replied, “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? ⁴ For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother’ and ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’ ⁵ But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is ‘devoted to God,’ ⁶ they are not to ‘honor their father or mother’ with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. ⁷ You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: ⁸ “ ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. ⁹ They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules (Isa. 29:13).”

And he continued, “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and, ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’ But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is **Corban** (that is, devoted to God)— then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do *many things* like that.” **Mark 7:9-13**

“The traditions had been separated from God himself and had become the real authority. Thus, ironically, the Law became an obstacle to a real encounter with God because the means had been mistaken for the end. Sometimes, humans of various traditions, including followers of Jesus, have been able to hide behind legal observance and assume that this establishes their righteousness and God’s indebtedness to them.”

- **Ben Witherington III**, Matthew (2006)

Matthew 15:10-20 | Also found in Mark 7:14-23

¹⁰ Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. ¹¹ What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them.” ¹² Then the disciples came to him and asked, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?” ¹³ He replied, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. ¹⁴ Leave them; they are blind guides. If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.” ¹⁵ Peter said, “Explain the parable to us.” ¹⁶ “Are you still so dull?” Jesus asked them. ¹⁷ “Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? ¹⁸ But the things that come out of a person’s mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. ¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. ²⁰ These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them.”

Peter’s Vision: Acts 10

Then Peter began to speak: “*I now realize* how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all...” **Acts 10:34-36**

“Blessed is the congregation whose members treat different opinions and different practices with respect and abstain from verbal attacks. We are defiled, Jesus tells us, by the unloving words that spring so readily from our mouths.”

- **Douglas R.A. Hare**, Preaching & Teaching Matthew (1993)
