



**Life Group Discussion Guide**  
**“Exposing the Heart” – Matthew 15:1-20**  
Scott Paulson – May 10, 2026

**Main thought:**

Jesus teaches that true spirituality is not about external rituals, religious performance, or keeping man-made rules. It’s about a transformed heart that responds to God’s grace and reflects that grace in the way we love and treat people.

**Ice-Breaker**

- What is a piece of wisdom or a helpful practice you learned from your mom?

**Questions**

1. What stood out to you from Matthew 15:1-20?
2. Why do you think people naturally drift toward rule-keeping as the basis for a right standing with God? What is the problem with this?
3. Have you ever experienced a form of religion that felt more focused on appearances or rituals rather than genuine love for God and people? What impact did that have on you and those around you?
4. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for using spiritual practices as an excuse to neglect caring for their parents. How is it possible when “doing things for God” sometimes becomes disconnected from loving people well?
5. Read Matthew 15:8–9 together. Why does God care so much about the heart and not just outward behavior?
6. The message emphasizes that Bible study, prayer, fasting, and spiritual disciplines are good things—but they are not the basis of our standing before God. Why is that distinction so important?
7. Consider the quote: “If I *have* to study, it becomes bondage. If I *get* to study, it becomes freedom.” What changes when spiritual practices become a response to God’s love instead of an attempt to earn it?
8. Jesus teaches that the real issue is a “heart problem”, not merely a behavior problem. Why is behavior modification alone never enough to truly change a person?
9. Where are you most tempted to rely on external performance or appearances rather than genuine dependence on Jesus?

**Prayer:** Take some time to pray for each other.