

**Lesson: The Question of Tradition**

**Objective:** To learn that it is the "dirty" heart that makes us ugly and unclean before God (in God's eyes).

**Background:** This was the last year of Jesus' ministry, and the religious leaders hated Jesus more and more each day. They followed Jesus everywhere, watching Him carefully so that they might find fault with Him. The tradition of "hand washing" was one of many "traditions" the Jews were taught to follow. These traditions were the teaching of men and not of God; but the religious leaders made the Jews follow their traditions more than "God's Word".

**Instructions:** Read carefully Matthew 15:1-20 as if you were there when it happened.

**Let's Think:** Read the verses given at the end of each question before answering it. PLEASE!

1. a) Is this the first time the Scribes and Pharisees, the religious leaders of the Jews found fault with Jesus? Explain. (Please review Lesson 3)

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b) What fault did they find with Jesus this time? Does it have to do with God's teaching (God's Word)? Explain. (Matthew 15:1-2; also Mark 7:1-5)

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2. a) In His answer to the religious leaders, Jesus pointed out their error (mistake). What is their error? (Matthew 15:3) Give an example. (Matthew 15:4-6)

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b) Which is more important to the Scribes and the Pharisees, God's Word or tradition (man-made regulations)? Were they right or wrong?

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3. a) To the Jews, the Scribes and Pharisees were "special" people for they were very religious, But what did Jesus call them? (Matthew 15:7,14) Why? (read Matthew 15:7-9)

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b) By the way, can we "fool" people? How about God, can we fool Him? Why?

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4. a) After pointing out openly the error of the Scribes, the Jewish teachers, what did Jesus teach the crowd about being “unclean”? (Matthew 15:10-11)

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b) Will the Jews become “unclean” in God’s eyes (defiled), as they were taught, if they eat with “unwashed” hands? (Matthew 15:20b; also Mark 7:3) Why? (Matthew 15:17)

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5. a) What is it that makes us really “unclean” and “ugly”? Does it come from “outside” or “inside” of us? (Matthew 15:18-20; also Mark 7:20-23)

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b) Which color pencil would you use, white, red, or black, to color a man’s heart before and after he accepts Jesus (believes in Jesus)? Why?

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6. a) If you were to color your heart now, which color pencil would you use? Why?

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b) Read slowly Mark 7:21-23 and see if your heart is clean. Do you know Jesus alone can make it clean no matter how dirty it is?

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Let’ Remember: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.”  
(Psalm 51:10, Old Testament)

