

Eyes on Christ, Not Man

Ken Alvis
March 2, 2014

SCRIPTURE

Mark 7:1-8: 26

1. Man's Traditions vs. Eyes on Christ (Mark 7:1-13)

Application: Gut check! Is there any aspect of your life where "man's traditions" have replaced God? If so, what is it and what will you do to change?

2. One Woman's Unwavering Eyes on Christ (Mark 7:24-30; Matt. 15:21-28)

Application: Circle how you rate your current relationship with Christ.

Stranger Acquaintance Friend Good Friend Best Friend

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What specific step can you take now to grow closer to Christ? Write it down!

3. Eyes on Christ for all our needs (Mark 8:1-10)

Philippians 4:19; Mark 11:24

Application: **True or False?** I let God use me now in my current life circumstances (good or bad).

If false, what is holding you back and what can you do to have "eyes on Christ?"

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Community Group Curriculum
For the week of March 2, 2014
"Out-of-Bounds Jesus"
Mark 7:1-8:26

BIG PICTURE

In this section Jesus continues to manifest the coming kingdom through teaching and miracles, and begins to meet major opposition to his ministry. And what a passage it is! Jesus calls a woman in need a "dog," pokes his fingers where they don't belong, spits on a sick guy, and dines *alfresco* with thousands of despised Gentiles – all the while belittling the Pharisees. How can you resist learning more about this "out-of-bounds" Jesus?!

LET'S DIG IN!

1. Read Mark 7:1-13

What is ceremonial washing and why was it so important to the Pharisees? Why does Jesus call them hypocrites?

According to Jesus, what is essential to true worship? Staying focused on God during worship isn't easy. When your mind starts to wander, how do you focus your heart on God?

How did the Pharisees give precedence to tradition over Scripture?

Are there traditions that we observe today that either get in the way or could get in the way of honoring God? Explain.

2. Read Mark 7:14-23

How does Jesus' view of becoming "unclean" differ from that of the Pharisees?

What is the main point in this passage? How can we focus more on the heart and less on the outward (body)?

3. Read Mark 7:24-30

Jesus' response to the Syrophenician woman is perplexing at first - how could Jesus withhold mercy from her, even calling her a dog? Yet the special calling of Israel as God's own people is a whole-Bible theme, found not only in the Old Testament but also the New Testament (e.g. Romans 1:16; 9:4-5). How does the woman's response indicate humility and persistence?

4. Read Mark 7:31-37

What is the first thing Jesus does with the deaf man? Why do you think Jesus did this? How did Jesus heal this man? Why does Jesus use this odd technique of healing? How does the crowd respond to the healing? What type (suffering or political liberator) of messiah are the people expecting?

5. Read Mark 8:1-10

What does the disciples' response to Jesus (v. 4) tell us about their faith?

How does verse 5 tell us that our Lord can use us at any stage of life or readiness? When God calls us to action it is easy to offer an excuse, isn't it? How does this story give us encouragement not to use excuses?

6. Read Mark 8:11-21

Yeast is a common biblical symbol for evil, since both grow quickly and easily, often hidden from view. How does Jesus use this definition of yeast in this story?

Ok, the disciples have had repeated exposure to Jesus' teaching and mighty works. Why did they still not "get it?" Finally, how can we avoid the errors of both the Pharisees and the disciples?

PRAYER PLEASE

Let us **adore God** for who He is – *"Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things. Wealth and honor come from you alone, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in your hand, and at your discretion people are made great and given strength."* 1 Chronicles 29:11-12

KEY DEFINITIONS

Pharisee – A member of a popular religious party in New Testament times characterized by strict adherence to the law of Moses and also to extra biblical Jewish traditions. The Pharisees were frequently criticized by Jesus for their hypocritical practices. The apostle Paul was a zealous Pharisee prior to his conversion.

Gentile – Anyone who is not Jewish. At times the New Testament use the term "Greek" as a synonym for Gentile (e.g. 1 Corinthians 1:22-23).