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Daily Devotional - Sunday, June 16, 2024

JUNE 16TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Sometimes we act like following Jesus requires building an impressive religious resume. We make sure our calendar is packed with plenty of to-do items for Jesus. How many church committees have we served on? How many times have we read through the Bible? Do we have perfect attendance at church services? Do we look the part of a perfect Christian?

Matthew 15 contains a conversation between Jesus and the Pharisees about tradition and purity. The Pharisees were accusing Jesus' disciples of breaking tradition by not washing their hands before

These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

MATTHEW 15:8

eating (v. 2). Jesus highlighted the Pharisees' hypocrisy, emphasizing that it's not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of it (v. 11). Jesus was redirecting their focus from external rituals to their heart's condition. He declared that what defiles a person comes from the heart and is not caused by what a person consumes.

Jesus listed several unclean things that come out of our mouths that actually come from our hearts. From our hearts come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, and slander (vv. 18–19). The mouth simply reveals what has been in our hearts all along.

What lesson can we learn? It is critical to prioritize the state of our hearts over the performance of religious duties. Jesus said, “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me” (v. 8). God’s presence is not dependent on our outward practices but on our inward commitment and love for Him. He desires hearts that are devoted to Him more than merely complying with tradition. It is critical to do some internal “housecleaning” to discover, through confession and repentance, what evil lurks in our hearts.

Go Deeper

How are we sometimes like the Pharisees? What behaviors do we consider unclean and clean today? Do we sometimes prioritize the performance of religious duties over the state of our hearts?

Pray with Us: How do we get rid of hypocrisy? Jesus, we confess we often resemble the Pharisees when we honor You with our lips, but our hearts are hardened. Draw us by Your Spirit to love You with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength.

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