



# Mark 7 - Living From the Reality of the Heart

by John Himmelberger

## Intro

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Mark 7 reveals that Kingdom maturity begins with the transformation of the heart. Jesus confronts empty religion, exposing the difference between outward performance and inward surrender. True holiness does not come through tradition, rituals, or appearances but through a heart renewed by God's grace. Humility receives what pride cannot, and those who hear the King's voice are changed from the inside out. The Kingdom produces lives that naturally bear good fruit because they have first been transformed at the root.

## My Intention and Assumptions

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I hope that your relationship with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit is strengthened through this teaching. My assumption is that you have read or are reading all 66 books of the Bible for context. This is meant to be salt and make you thirsty. You're welcome.

## About the Author

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John Himmelberger is a teacher, pastor, and lifelong learner. With decades of experience walking with Jesus and leading others into transformational truth, John brings a grounded yet radical perspective rooted in Scripture, personal growth, and kingdom living.

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# Walking in Kingdom Maturity

## Mark 7 – Living From the Reality of the Heart

### Intro

Mark 1 revealed the Kingdom had arrived.

Mark 2 revealed forgiveness.

Mark 3 revealed alignment.

Mark 4 revealed trust.

Mark 5 revealed freedom.

Mark 6 revealed provision.

But another question immediately follows.

What truly makes a person clean?

Can outward obedience produce inward transformation?

Can religious activity change the human heart?

Where does the Kingdom begin its deepest work?

Mark 7 reveals that Kingdom maturity grows when we allow Jesus to transform our hearts rather than merely improve our behavior.

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### Focus

Mark 7 reveals that Kingdom maturity develops when our hearts are transformed from the inside out.

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## Key Truth

The Kingdom changes us from the inside out.

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## Teaching Flow

### 1. Tradition Must Never Replace the Heart

Mark 7:1–13

The Pharisees notice that Jesus' disciples eat without performing the ceremonial washing of hands.

Their concern is not hygiene.

It is tradition.

Jesus answers by quoting Isaiah.

"This people honors Me with their lips,  
but their heart is far from Me."

#### Truth

Kingdom maturity values God's heart above human tradition.

#### Deeper Insight

Jesus is not condemning every tradition.

Traditions can remind us of truth and help form healthy rhythms.

The danger comes when traditions become substitutes for relationship.

The Pharisees had become experts at preserving outward practices while neglecting inward transformation.

They carefully guarded ceremonies.

Yet they overlooked mercy.

They defended customs.

Yet they ignored compassion.

The Kingdom always begins deeper than appearance.

God desires transformed hearts more than perfected rituals.

### **Gold Nugget**

Whenever tradition becomes more important than transformation, the tradition has become an idol.

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## **2. Worship Begins in the Heart**

### **Mark 7:6–8**

Jesus continues:

"Their hearts are far from Me."

### **Truth**

God evaluates worship by the condition of the heart before the quality of the performance.

### **Deeper Insight**

The issue was never dirty hands.

It was distant hearts.

People can sing beautiful songs while remaining spiritually disconnected.

They can speak correct theology while resisting the work of God within them.

Kingdom worship is not measured first by outward expression.

It is measured by inward surrender.

Everything flowing outward begins somewhere within.

### **Gold Nugget**

God is not seeking polished religion.

He is seeking surrendered hearts.

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## **3. Defilement Comes From Within**

### **Mark 7:14–23**

Jesus gathers the crowd.

"It is not what enters a person from outside that defiles him..."

Instead, evil proceeds from within.

### **Truth**

The deepest problems are not outside us.

They originate within the human heart.

### **Deeper Insight**

Religion often concentrates on external behavior.

Jesus exposes the source.

Sinful actions are fruit.

The heart is the root.

The Kingdom never settles for trimming bad fruit.

It transforms the tree itself.

This fulfills the promise of the New Covenant.

God does not merely give better rules.

He gives a new heart.

Real holiness grows naturally from inward transformation.

### **Gold Nugget**

Behavior reveals the heart.

It cannot heal it.

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## **4. Humility Receives What Pride Cannot**

### **Mark 7:24–30**

A Syrophoenician woman comes seeking healing for her daughter.

She is a Gentile.

An outsider.

Yet she refuses to walk away.

Even when Jesus' response seems difficult, she continues trusting His goodness.

## **Truth**

Kingdom maturity receives grace through humility.

## **Deeper Insight**

This conversation is not meant to push her away.

It reveals her remarkable faith.

She is not offended.

She is not entitled.

She simply believes the King's goodness extends beyond every barrier.

She understands something profound.

Even the smallest expression of God's grace carries unlimited power.

Her humility opens what pride could never unlock.

## **Gold Nugget**

Faith does not demand a place at the table.

It trusts the generosity of the King.

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## **5. Jesus Opens What Sin Closed**

### **Mark 7:31–37**

People bring a man who is deaf and unable to speak clearly.

Jesus leads him aside.

He touches him.

Then says,

"Ephphatha."

"Be opened."

Immediately his ears are opened.

His speech is restored.

### **Truth**

The Kingdom restores our ability to hear God and respond to Him.

### **Deeper Insight**

This miracle is wonderfully symbolic.

Humanity has struggled to hear God's voice since Eden.

Sin deafens the heart.

Fear distorts our hearing.

Shame silences our testimony.

Jesus restores both hearing and speech.

Those who truly hear the King eventually begin speaking His goodness.

Transformation always overflows.

Restored people become proclaiming people.

### **Gold Nugget**

The voice that opens deaf ears still opens hardened hearts.

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# What Mark 7 Is Really Doing

Mark 7 turns the Kingdom inward.

The issue is no longer storms.

Or demons.

Or bread.

Jesus now addresses the source from which everything else flows.

The human heart.

Traditions cannot transform it.

Rules cannot cleanse it.

Performance cannot heal it.

Only the King can create a new heart.

The Kingdom is not primarily concerned with outward appearance.

It is restoring people from the inside out.

Mark 7 teaches us that Kingdom maturity is not measured by external religious behavior.

It is measured by inward transformation that naturally produces outward fruit.

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## Immature Life

- Focuses on appearances

- Judges others by external behavior
  - Depends upon religious performance
  - Protects traditions above people
  - Treats symptoms instead of roots
  - Seeks acceptance through rule keeping
  - Resists correction
  - Lives from outward conformity
  - Values image above integrity
  - Cleans the outside while neglecting the heart
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## Mature Life

- Lives from a transformed heart
- Welcomes God's searching work
- Values relationship above ritual
- Walks in humility
- Allows Jesus to expose hidden motives
- Receives grace with gratitude
- Produces outward fruit from inward life
- Honors God's heart above human tradition
- Hears God's voice clearly

- Reflects inward transformation outwardly
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## Deep Activation

What traditions have become substitutes for intimacy with God?

Am I more concerned with appearance or transformation?

What attitudes continue to grow from my heart?

Where is Jesus inviting me into deeper humility?

What hidden motives is the Holy Spirit gently exposing?

Do I spend more energy managing behavior than surrendering my heart?

Where do I need Jesus to say, "Be opened"?

What would change this week if I believed God cared more about my heart than my performance?

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## Declaration

I live from a transformed heart.

Jesus is renewing me from the inside out.

My worship flows from intimacy.

My heart belongs to the Father.

I welcome His searching work.

I value relationship above religion.

The Holy Spirit is producing good fruit within me.

My ears are open to hear His voice.

My mouth declares His goodness.

My life reflects the transformation of the Kingdom.

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## Final Thought

The Pharisees spent their lives washing their hands.

Jesus spent His ministry cleansing hearts.

One changes appearance.

The other changes people.

The Kingdom has never been satisfied with polished behavior.

It seeks transformed lives.

(pause)

The greatest miracle in Mark 7 is not simply that deaf ears were opened.

It is that Jesus revealed where every true miracle begins.

The heart.

And when the heart is opened to the King, everything else begins to follow.