

## Home Group notes for the week following 2nd September 2018

### LIVING GOD'S TRUTH

#### AS WE GATHER

By this time in Jesus' ministry the Jewish religious leaders were openly hostile towards Him. They were looking for ways to discredit Him and to trap Him.

#### READING SCRIPTURE **Mark 7:1-8, 14-15 + 21-23 James 1:17-27**

[optional readings Song of Solomon 2:8-13 Psalm 45:1-2 + 6-9]

#### THINKING TOGETHER

When the religious leaders accused Jesus and His disciples of flouting the law, Jesus answered , beginning with a quotation from Isaiah (29:13), and accused them of hypocrisy because they kept all the rules and traditions without their hearts being involved – their actions aimed at making them look holy but did not reflect inner holiness to honour God (Mark 7:1-8).

They substituted man-made rules and traditions in place of listening to God for guidance for life [optional readings James 1:22-25 John 14:16-17]. Ethical (moral / true) religion had become buried under a mass of tabus and rules [optional reading Matthew 23:1-7]. True religion must always come from listening to and accepting, the voice of God.

**When do Christians fall into the trap of hypocrisy? Discuss** [James 1:17-20]

**How can the local faith community put God's Word / Truth into practice? Discuss**

**Are there still religious leaders today who claim that their interpretation of God's word is as important as God's word itself? Discuss**

[optional readings 2 Thessalonians 2:15-16 2 Timothy 2:2 + 14-15]

**Why should we look to Christ for the guidance of our lives / behaviour? Discuss**

[optional reading John 13:15 and 14:6]

Mark records that Jesus then went on to make a revolutionary statement that Jews found hard to believe / accept (Mark 1:14-15 + 17-19)

**Why did the Jews find this statement hard to accept? Discuss**

[optional reading Leviticus 11]

What Jesus was saying was that things cannot be clean or unclean in a religious sense. Only people can be defiled by their own actions, which are products of their hearts / thoughts [James 1:17-21 + 26-27].

Every outward act is preceded by an inward act of choice (Mark 7:20-27)

**Do you agree with the above statement? Discuss** [optional reading Philippians 4:8]

Jesus explained to His disciples (Mark 7:21-23) that ceremonial purity is external obedience to a law as evidence of the inner source of holy living – a right relationship with God through faith; and that all evil actions begin with a single thought

**How can we counter the temptations of our thoughts? Discuss**

[optional readings Ephesians 6:10-11 Deuteronomy 6:4-6 and 10:12]

**IN CLOSING**

The human heart is sinful and is in a state of constant conflict between God's truth and man-made rules / traditions. We are unable to control or change our nature on our own

**How can we change?**

**Summary of the contrast between man-made traditions / rules and God's truth**

<b>Man made rules / traditions</b>	<b>God's truth</b>
Outward forms - bondage	Inward faith – liberty
Trifling rules	Fundamental principles
Outward piety	True inward holiness
Neglect and replace the Word	Exalts the Word of God

**PRAYER**

O God of eternal light, your Word is Truth.  
Make us quick to listen and slow to speak,  
that the word implanted in us will take root  
to nourish all we say and do. Amen