

Our physical appearance doesn't define who we are; it's our heart that matters. Jesus had strong words for those masters of appearances—the super-religious but unsaved “Pharisees and teachers of the law.” They asked Jesus why His disciples didn't wash their hands before eating, as their religious traditions dictated (Matthew 15:1-2). Jesus asked, “Why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?” (v. 3). Then He pointed out how they had invented a legal loophole to keep their wealth instead of caring for their parents (vv. 4-6), thus dishonouring them and violating the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12).

If we obsess over appearances .. we're violating the spirit of His law. Jesus said that “out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality,” and the like (Matthew 15:19). Only God, through the righteousness of His Son Jesus, can give us a clean heart.

By **Tim Gustafson**

REFLECT & PRAY

When our motive is to impress others, we're not impressing God.

Lord, we are so prone to rely on our own efforts to impress You and others. Help us to be authentic in all our relationships, and to enjoy the restored heart we can have through Your forgiveness.

INSIGHT

When Jerusalem leaders asked Jesus why His disciples ignored the custom of ritual washing (Matthew 15:1-2), He quoted one of their own prophets. Seven hundred years earlier, Isaiah warned about the danger of honouring God with their mouths while their hearts remained far from Him (Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:7-8). Rules of religious compliance have never been a good substitute for the kind of water and washing Jesus gives (see John 13:1-17). Mart DeHaan



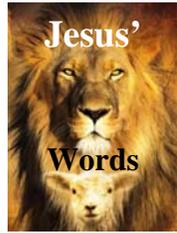
Central Mountains Baptist Church

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Appearances

When a uni class went on a cultural field trip, the instructor almost didn't recognise one of his star pupils. In the classroom she had concealed 15 cm heels beneath her jeans. But in her walking boots she was less than five feet tall. “My heels are how I want to be,” she laughed. “But my boots are how I really am.”





What Matters Spiritually II

(Proverbs 4:23) "Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life."

In Mark 7:14-23 Jesus shows why it is the heart that matters, in two steps:

1. Clearing up a common misconception:

_____, verses 14-17

(Matthew 15:11) "'Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.'"

(Romans 14:17) "for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, ..."

(Philippians 4:8) "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy; meditate on these things."

(Ephesians 5:18) "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,"

(Matthew 15:12-14) "Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" **[13]** But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. **[14]** "Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.'"

(Matthew 13:37-39) "He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. {38} "The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. {39} "The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels."

(2 Corinthians 4:4) "whose minds the god of this age has blinded, ..."

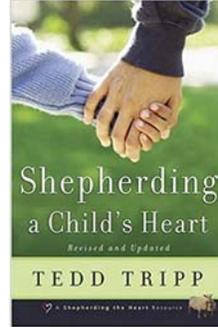
(1 Timothy 6:5) "... From such withdraw yourself."

(Romans 16:17) "... avoid them."

(Titus 3:10) "Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition,"

(Colossians 2:8) "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ."

(Colossians 2:16-17) "So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, {17} which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ."



(Colossians 2:20-23) "Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations; {21} "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," {22} which all concern things which perish with the using; according to the commandments and doctrines of men? {23} These things



indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh."

2. Reinforcing the spiritual reality: the _____ to God, verses 7-13

(Matthew 15:18) "'But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man."

(Luke 11:37-40) "And as He spoke, a certain Pharisee asked Him to dine with him. So He went in and sat down to eat. {38} When the Pharisee saw it, he marveled that He had not first washed before dinner. {39} Then the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed and wickedness. {40} "Foolish ones! Did not He who made the outside make the inside also?"

(1 Samuel 16:7) "... the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.'"

(Titus 1:15) "... even their mind and conscience are defiled."

(Matthew 12:34) "'Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? **For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.**"

(Hebrews 11:6) "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, ..."

(Jeremiah 17:9) "'The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"

(Ezekiel 36:26-27) "'I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. {27} "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them."

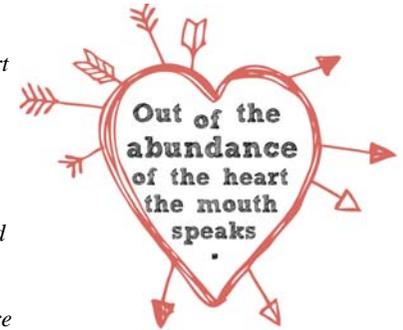
(2 Corinthians 5:17) "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

(Galatians 5:17) "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish."

(Matthew 15:19) "'For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."

(2 Corinthians 10:5) "... every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,"

(Hebrews 4:12) "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."



Matthew 12:34