

THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN

MARK 7:1-23

I. The Legalists Find Fault. (1-4)

**Mark 7:1 Then came together
unto him the Pharisees, and
certain of the scribes, which
came from Jerusalem.**

Mark 7:2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault.

“Unclean” (koinais, “common”), as Mark explained for his Gentile readers, meant ceremonially unwashed. It was a technical term among Jews denoting whatever was contaminated according to their religious rituals and thus was unfit to be called holy or devoted to God.

Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 2, p. 132). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Two Kinds of Jewish Law

1. Written Law (Old Testament)
2. Oral Law (Commandments of Prominent Jewish Teachers)

**Mark 7:3 For the Pharisees,
and all the Jews, except they
wash their hands oft, eat not,
holding the tradition of the
elders.**

Mark 7:4 And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables.

“Rabbi Eleazer said, ‘He who expounds the Scriptures in opposition to the tradition has no share in the world to come’ . . . The Mishna, a collection of Jewish traditions in the Talmud, records, ‘It is a greater offense to teach anything contrary to the voice of the Rabbis than to contradict Scripture itself.’” (Wiersbe)

**“What a person says never has
the same authority as God’s
Word.**

“Even if they sincerely say it is from God, it never has the same authority as God’s Word.

**“Even if everyone accepts it, it
never has the same authority
as God’s Word.**

**“Even if it makes perfect sense,
it never has the same authority
as God’s Word.” (Guzik)**

II. They Question Jesus about Tradition. (5)

**Mark 7:5 Then the Pharisees
and scribes asked him, Why
walk not thy disciples
according to the tradition of
the elders, but eat bread with
unwashen hands?**

III. Jesus Responds to the Legalists. (6-13)

**A. They taught men's doctrines
as God's commands.**

Mark 7:6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

Mark 7:7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

“You can live under the authority of any standards you choose. You can autonomously decide to avoid ice cream, cheez-its and bottled water if you prefer. Just don’t try to increase the credibility of your personal standards by saying they are God’s standards.” (Brian Edwards)

**B. They put God's commands
to the side to keep their own
traditions.**

**Mark 7:8 For laying aside the
commandment of God, ye hold
the tradition of men, as the
washing of pots and cups: and
many other such like things ye
do.**

**C. They rejected God's
commandments to keep their
traditions.**

Mark 7:9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

**Mark 7:10 For Moses said,
Honour thy father and thy
mother; and, Whoso curseth
father or mother, let him die the
death:**

Mark 7:11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free.

**Mark 7:12 And ye suffer him
no more to do ought for his
father or his mother;**

“But by means of the tradition, the responsibility of children to their parents could be easily circumvented (v. 11). A son need only declare that what he had intended to give his father and mother be considered “Corban,” i.e., a gift devoted to God, and it could no longer be designated for his parents.

By devoting the gift to God, a son did not necessarily promise it to the temple nor did he prevent its use for himself. What he did do was to exclude legally his parents from benefiting from it (v. 12). So the very purpose for which the commandment was given was set aside by the tradition.”

Wessel, W. W. (1984). Mark. In F. E. Gaebelinein (Ed.), The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke (Vol. 8, pp. 678–679). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

**Mark 7:13 Making the word of
God of none effect through
your tradition, which ye have
delivered: and many such like
things do ye.**

IV. Jesus Teaches the Congregation. (14-16)

Mark 7:14 And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand:

Mark 7:15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

**Mark 7:16 If any man have
ears to hear, let him hear.**

V. Jesus' Explains His Teaching to the Disciples. (17-23)

Mark 7:17 And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

Mark 7:18 And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him;

**Mark 7:19 Because it entereth
not into his heart, but into the
belly, and goeth out into the
draught, purging all meats?**

**Mark 7:20 And he said, That
which cometh out of the man,
that defileth the man.**

**Mark 7:21 For from within, out
of the heart of men, proceed
evil thoughts, adulteries,
fornications, murders,**

**Mark 7:22 Thefts,
covetousness, wickedness,
deceit, lasciviousness, an evil
eye, blasphemy, pride,
foolishness:**

**Mark 7:23 All these evil things
come from within, and defile
the man.**

**“Our wicked thoughts and affections,
words and actions, defile us, and
these only. As a corrupt fountain
sends forth corrupt streams, so does
a corrupt heart send forth corrupt
reasonings, corrupt appetites and
passions, and all the wicked words
and actions that come from them.**

“A spiritual understanding of the law of God, and a sense of the evil of sin, will cause a man to seek for the grace of the Holy Spirit, to keep down the evil thoughts and affections that work within.” (Matthew Henry)