

Main Idea: God's desire for us is a life transformed from within, rather than just the outward observance of rules and doctrine.

Connecting

What's your favorite or least favorite part of Thanksgiving dinner?

Does your family have traditions that you'd like to see changed or tweaked a little?

Understanding

(Note to leaders: For additional insight, you might consider reading these verses in other translations, such as The Message or The Living Bible)

Read Mark 7:1-5. What's the problem with the disciples according to the religious leaders?

Read Mark 7:6-13. Why do you think Jesus had such a strong reaction to the religious leaders' question?

Read Mark 7:14-23. How would you summarize the main point that Jesus is trying to make?

Living

How can focusing on religious traditions keep us from examining the condition of our hearts? How do we prevent that from happening? What types of "early warning signals" do you have to guard against that?

Why do you think it's easier to focus on religious traditions than on the condition of your heart?

Can you think of habits or practices that help you focus on God and the condition of your heart? Would you share those with your group?

Leaders: the Examen is a guideline for daily, reflective prayer that many people throughout the ages have found helpful. If you think your group would benefit from this, here's a link:

<https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/jesuit-a-z/terms-e/daily-examen>

Next Week: Mark 7:24-8:10