



## WORD

<sup>5</sup>And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” <sup>6</sup>And he said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; <sup>7</sup>in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ <sup>8</sup>You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.” **MARK 7:5-8 (READ ALSO MARK 7:1-4.)**

In every new season, we seek to do many things. But, as Christians, everything we do should be driven by one thing—honoring God. Living a life that honors Him is the appropriate response to all that God has done for us. We are called to honor God and make Him known. But what does it really mean to honor God? As we begin a new season, let us look more closely at what it means to live a life that honors God.

## 1 Honoring God begins from the heart.

And he said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me . . .’” **MARK 7:6**

When the Pharisees questioned Jesus about His disciples’ actions—eating with unwashed hands—Jesus called them *hypocrites*. A hypocrite is one who claims to have certain beliefs but does not truthfully live according to these beliefs. The Bible tells us that if we truly honor God, it will not be merely with the outward expression of our words or actions. Honoring God ultimately begins internally—from a heart that is genuinely surrendered and close to Him. What does it mean for one’s heart to be near to God?

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## 2 Honoring God means being in right relationship with Him.

<sup>4</sup>“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. <sup>5</sup>You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. <sup>6</sup>And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. <sup>7</sup>You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.” **DEUTERONOMY 6:4-7**

Israel was God’s chosen people—He was their God and they belonged to Him. God’s command to Israel was to love Him. This command is relational, a command to love God and remain faithful to Him. In the same way, as God’s children, we are called to a relationship with Him, to love Him with all that we are. Without being in right relationship with God, we cannot honor Him. What does it mean to love God with all your heart, soul, and might?

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## 3 Honoring God means obeying His Word.

“... <sup>7</sup>in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ <sup>8</sup>You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.” **MARK 7:7,8**

To honor God means to be devoted to Him, to regard Him with utmost reverence and awe. And this necessarily means treasuring every word that comes from God. If we desire to honor God and worship Him in truth, we are to live our lives in obedience to His Word—not what we think pleases others, or following our own standards. Why do the hypocrites worship *in vain*? How is this different from how God expects His people to live?

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