

RCC LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION (FACILITATOR)

MARK CHAPTER 7

Discussion Starter

- Do you believe that there are differences between someone's behavior being modified and someone's heart changing? If so, what are those differences?

Opening Prayer

- Ask if someone wants to volunteer before leading the prayer

Tell the Story

Read the Story (Mark 7:1-37)

- Read out loud as a group, 5 verses per person. Let everyone know they can opt out if they would like.

Breaking it Down

- All questions should be utilized as appropriate based upon group dynamics to facilitate both understanding and discussion. Don't feel tied to the questions and don't feel like you have to get through every question. Follow the Spirit's lead! All questions are a matter of perspective in some way BUT there are specific questions that this is truer of and these questions have been indicated to be perspective/opinion questions.

Mark 7:1-13

- In light of some of the events that we read about in Mark chapter 6 including Jesus feeding the 5,000 plus, Jesus walking on the water, and Jesus healing a ton of sick people, how crazy and ridiculous does the Pharisees' and scribes' question in verse 5 seem?
 - Their question shouldn't only seem crazy and ridiculous. It really is. While they may not have been present for the all three of the

major events mentioned above that occurred in Mark chapter 6, they at a minimum had heard about them and probably much more than this. The question that they were asking wasn't even rooted in the Old Testament law. Rather, it was their own expansion of the Old Testament law. The question was very out of place in light of all the things that Jesus had just done but the question was very out of place because it had nothing to do with who Jesus was but rather who the religious leaders were. They were condemning themselves and did not even realize it.

- How would you characterize Jesus' response to the religious leaders in verses 6-13?
 - This is a perspective and opinion question so just listen as the facilitator.
- Why does Jesus bring up one of the Ten Commandments (honoring your father and mother in verses 10-13?)
 - He wants the religious leaders to recognize not only how ridiculous they sound but also to recognize how absurd and hypocritical they are being. He is pointing out that they would actually try and twist the law to their own liking to justify breaking the commandment of honoring your father and mother.
- Why is Jesus so upset and frustrated?
 - Jesus is both upset and frustrated because the religious leaders are focused on external behaviors versus inward transformation.
- For you and me today, do you believe that it is easier for us to focus on changing our behaviors or allowing God to change our hearts? Why?
 - This is a perspective and opinion question so just listen as the facilitator.
- How do we avoid falling into the trap of what Jesus condemns in Matthew 23:25-28?

- This is a perspective and opinion question so just listen as the facilitator.

□ Mark 7:14-23

- Why does Jesus tell this parable? HINT...It is not just to declare all foods clean.
 - Jesus wanted and wants people to understand that spiritual transformation is an inside out process (it begins with the heart) and not the other way around. Behavior modification may produce quicker short-term results but spiritual transformation addresses heart issues, which are root issues that drive behaviors.
- Why does it seem (even in verse 18) that the people of God, the disciples and the religious leaders are the ones who fail to see what they should see about God? What if anything do you think this says about you and me as disciples of Jesus today?
 - This is a perspective and opinion question so just listen as the facilitator.
- When Jesus says what He does in verses 20-23, what in essence is He saying about people taking ownership and responsibility for decisions that do not honor God?
 - When I find myself making decisions that do not honor God and who He is, it's not about blaming someone else or blaming a set of circumstances. It should be about me taking full ownership and responsibility of my decisions including doing some wrestling with God about where my heart is at with Him.

□ Mark 7:24-30

- Why does this story when put up against the backdrop of who Jesus is interacting with at the beginning of Mark chapter 7, become absolutely HUGE in the life and ministry of Jesus?
 - Jesus encountered a Gentile woman of all people. This was a double whammy for her, being both female and a Gentile. Of all

the individuals within this story who should have had tremendous faith that actually moved the heart of Jesus, this Gentile woman would not have been anyone's first choice if a choice at all. She, in her belief, faith, and actions put the religious leaders and even the disciples of Jesus to shame. She becomes the prime example of who Jesus is talking about regarding spiritual transformation being an inside out process rather than the other way around. A marginalized outcast "gets it" more than the "people of God."

- How should this reality inform our living as disciples of Jesus today?
 - This is a perspective and opinion questions so just listen as the facilitator.
- Jesus and the woman engage in an extremely brief but interesting and telling conversation. Is Jesus really calling the woman a dog in verse 27 and if so, why is He doing this?
 - Jesus does indeed refer to the woman as a "dog" and the full stigma of the term doesn't come through in our English language. However, Jesus takes some of the sting out of the term by only using a form of the word. Jesus isn't saying that He views the woman as a dog but he most certainly is saying that the world around her does and He is also seeing how she actually views herself.
- What does the woman's response in verse 28 indicate what she understands about herself and what she understands about Jesus?
 - The woman's response indicates her desperation and desire for Jesus' intervention knowing that He can change the course of her daughter's life and her life.

□ Mark 7:31-37

- What are the differences between ministering only to someone's spiritual condition versus ministering to the whole person?

- Ministering only to someone's spiritual condition involves only being concerned about their response to the invitation of Jesus. Ministering to the whole person means that the spiritual condition of a person is the most important thing but that I/we also care about all other aspects of that person as well. Their family, their physical condition, their mental condition, etc.
- How did Jesus ministering to the whole of the man who was deaf and had a speech impediment rather than just minister to his physical condition?
 - This is a perspective and opinion question so please listen as the facilitator.

□ Personal Reflection & Application

- With whom can you most closely relate in Mark chapter 7? Why?
 - The religious leaders
 - The disciples
 - The Gentile woman
- In what ways do you approach spiritual transformation as an outside in process rather than an inside out process? What do you need to allow the Lord to change so that you can view spiritual transformation as He does?

□ Final Application

- What does this passage teach us about God?
- What does this passage teach us about mankind?
- What is a command to obey in this passage?
- What has God revealed in your life that needs changing?
- What truth can be applied to your life about the gospel?

□ Closing & Prayer Requests

- Have a designated person to capture and share (as appropriate) within the life group.
- What happens in life group, stays in life group.
- Don't forget get to confirm the next meeting date and time
- Also recruit someone to do the story for the following week (Mark 7) if you haven't already done so.

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