

➤ **Read Luke 11:37—12:3.**

➤ **Reread Luke 11:37–44.**

1. Mark 7:3 explains that “the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands, holding to the tradition of the elders.” Jesus accepted this Pharisee’s invitation, but broke with that tradition, with which he was certainly familiar. What was the host Pharisee’s reaction to Jesus’ failure to abide by this cultural norm of ritual washing? (11:38)

Why do you think he reacts this way?

2. Jesus notes the Pharisee’s reaction and segues into talking to the Pharisees about the real problem: the human heart. He shifts the focus from the external to the internal. What remains inside even after they appear clean outside? (11:39b)
3. Jesus calls out the Pharisees’ foolishness in caring for the outside appearance while neglecting the inside.
 - a. What does Jesus remind the Pharisees of in 11:40?
 - b. Why do you think he gives them this reminder? (You may wish to consider these verses: Ps. 139:13–16; Col. 1:15–16.)
4. Like the Pharisees, modern culture and, at times, even the Christian community concentrate on outside appearances and cultivating an image. In what ways are you more concerned about keeping up appearances as a Christian than about your heart?

(You may want to pray for the Holy Spirit to give you awareness and conviction of sins of appearance management.)

5. Note that Jesus isn't calling for the Pharisees here to stop obeying the laws. He isn't suggesting that they stop tithing even the kitchen herbs. But what "more important matters of the law" (Mt. 23:23) are they neglecting that he is calling them back to? (11:41-42)
6. Reread Luke 11:43. What do you think is wrong with loving "the most important seats in the synagogues and respectful greetings in the marketplaces"?

Woe

Woe is an expression "of sadness over those who fail to recognise the true misery of their condition."¹

"[Woes] are not vindictive but stem from God's concern for his people and from his desire that they repent."²

7. Touching dead bodies and graves caused extreme religious defilement; therefore, the comparison Jesus makes in 11:44 is shocking. He is saying that "the Pharisees were like *unmarked graves* that did not look like graves at all! This meant that they were *unconsciously defiling others when they thought they were helping them become holier!*"³ What does Jesus say in Luke 17:1-2 that shows how seriously he takes the problem of people leading others into sin?

► Read Luke 11:45-52.

8. An "expert in the law" (11:45) finds Jesus' words insulting. What is the goal of the Lord's discipline and rebuke? (Heb. 12:5-6, 10b, 11; Rev. 3:19)
9. Jesus accuses the religious lawyers of overburdening the people with false interpretations of the law.
 - a. What is the purpose of God's law? (Ps. 19:7-11; Rom. 3:20; Gal. 3:23-25)
 - b. How do unjust lawmakers pervert God's good purpose? (11:46; Is. 10:1-2)

14. This is not the first time God has confronted the leaders of his people. Read Ezekiel 34:2–6 to see what he said to them.

Now read Ezekiel 34:10–16. What did God promise he would do?

How does Jesus fulfill this promise? (Jn. 10:11–16, 27–30)

¹ <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/dictionary-of-bible-themes/9250-woe>

² *NIV Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 1585, note on Matthew 23:13-16.

³ Warren W. Wiersbe. *An Exposition on the New Testament Comprising the Entire "BE" Series: The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton: SP Publications, Inc., 1989), 217.

⁴ Leon Morris. *The Gospel According to St. Luke: Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), 207.

⁵ Wiersbe, 219.