

Family Questions

- Why did Jesus have conflict with the religious leaders of his day?
- How can someone honor God with their lips, but not love Him more than anything else?

Observation Questions

- How does Jesus's quotation in vv. 8-9 link the previous passage and this one?
- What did Jesus mean by the word "defile" in v. 11?
- What is significant about the word "offended" in v. 12?
- What is the danger of following the Pharisees and scribes (see Matthew 23)? Why is Jesus calling them "blind guides" so shocking?
- Discuss other places in Matthew where Jesus addresses issues of the heart (e.g. 5:21-22; 5:27-28; 12:34). How do these help our understanding of this passage?

Application Questions

- What barriers might our false religion present to witnessing and evangelism?
- What does the Bible mean by the *heart*? Why is the heart important for biblical Christianity?
- Why can conservative Christians particularly fall prey to making Christianity about external purity at the expense of internal purity?

Prayer

Read Psalm 51:1-12. Confess any false religion. Praise God for his steadfast love and abundant mercy. Pray that we would find rest in the finished work of Christ.