



## GROW AT HOME

# DAILY DEVOTION

### DAY 8

#### READ

MATTHEW | CHAPTERS 15 + 16

#### FOCUS

<sup>1</sup>THEN SOME PHARISEES AND TEACHERS OF THE LAW CAME TO JESUS FROM JERUSALEM AND ASKED, <sup>2</sup>"WHY DO YOUR DISCIPLES BREAK THE TRADITION OF THE ELDERS? THEY DON'T WASH THEIR HANDS BEFORE THEY EAT!" <sup>3</sup>JESUS REPLIED, "AND WHY DO YOU BREAK THE COMMAND OF GOD FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR TRADITION?"

#### REFLECTION from DIRECTOR AUTUMN IGO

Wash your hands!! Stop touching that railing! Don't put your face on that pole! Use your elbow to push that button! Good, now wash your hands again...for the full 20 seconds...and use soap this time! All I can say is...my poor kids.

Over the last couple of months, I have become an expert on handwashing. There is an enemy out in the world and my greatest weapon is warm water and soap (I did not beat the hoarders to the hand sanitizer aisle--but that's ok, I like soap just fine). Don't judge me, but before this, I didn't give handwashing much thought. Yes, I washed my hands at all the proper times...but I'm not gonna lie, I didn't always wash for 20 seconds (singing Happy Birthday to monitor my progress) and sometimes I didn't use soap...again, don't judge! So even though I've read this passage hundreds of times, it hits home a little deeper today. AAAAAGH!!! The disciples didn't wash their hands before they ate...unclean!!!

You see, the uber-religious Jews of Jesus day washed their hands all the time for all sorts of occasions and all sorts of reasons (many of them good). In the instance of eating, not washing their hands was considered by some to be as grievous a sin as cheating on one's spouse. What the Pharisees and religious teachers were trying to do was to keep themselves "pure" with water...but the dirt on their hands was the least of their problems. They had filth on them that went soul-deep and all the handwashing in the world would never touch it.

That's what Jesus' response in this passage is aimed at...not their skin, but their souls. The questions asked are similar. Why did you break that? We ask questions like this all the time. Why did you break that pencil? Why did you break down that box? Why did you break that vase? Why did you break your brother's nose? Why did you break my heart? Though the questions are structured similarly the implications are vastly different. The consequences of breaking a pencil and breaking a heart are miles apart!

The religious leaders ask Jesus...why do your disciples break a tradition? He responds, why do you break a command? On the surface, traditions and commands don't look that different to us. Both govern the way we live our lives and both have consequences if they are broken. However, traditions are a bit more pliable...they can be changed by circumstances and cultural shifts. A command, on the other hand, cannot be changed. Why? Because the source of tradition is people--so people can change it. The source of a command is God--so no person can overrule or alter it.

I've seen a really beautiful example of this in the last week. A number of folks I follow on social media had weddings scheduled for this past weekend...weddings they were forced to call off because of our CA lockdown. I spoke to one of the brides and she told me that what God showed her in this last week was the difference between a wedding and a marriage. You see, a wedding is between two people and their community (tradition)...but a marriage is between two people and God (command). I was blessed to be able to witness as this bride and her groom stood before God (and 8 of their friends) and pledged to follow His commands for their lives. It was not a big traditional wedding...it was a holy marriage.



## GROW AT HOME

# DAILY DEVOTION

### DAY 8

#### REFLECTION from DIRECTOR AUTUMN IGO (CONT'D)

There are a lot of rules and traditions that we follow...and some that are morphing and changing every day. Two weeks ago we were told: wash your hands! Don't touch your face! Today we are being told where and when we can step out of our front door and for what reasons. Let's not fall into the trap of thinking more about these external rules/traditions than the commands that God has laid on our hearts...commands to love our spouses, to care for our children and parents, to love our neighbors. Let's try to spend more time today keeping these commands than we do following the others...and if our teenage boys forget to wash their hands one time (oh please no!)...it will be ok.

#### QUESTIONS

- IN OUR SOCIETY WHERE YOU SEE CULTURE AND TRADITION CONFLICTING WITH GOD'S COMMANDS?
- DO YOU HAVE ANY AREAS OF YOUR LIFE WHERE YOUR CULTURE AND TRADITIONS ARE TAKING PRIORITY OVER GOD'S COMMANDS? WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?