

Tough Questions from The Aussie Bible

*Five life-changing questions
posed by the master teacher—
Jesus of Nazareth.*

 **matthiasmedia**

Tough Questions from the Aussie Bible

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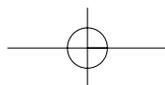
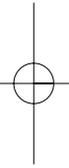
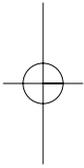
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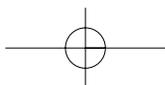
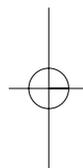
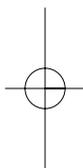
Tough Questions from The Aussie Bible

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SPECIAL THANKS:

We're very grateful for the assistance of the Bible Society of NSW in producing this resource. Their kind permission to use sections of *The Aussie Bible* is much appreciated.



Welcome to Tough Questions from The Aussie Bible

Heaps of people have discovered that reading *The Aussie Bible* (*Well, bits of it anyway!*) is fun. And through that small book they've discovered a lot about the life and personality of Jesus. But it's easy to miss the challenge Jesus poses.

In this set of studies we read about five episodes in the life of Jesus—first from *The Aussie Bible* and then from a translation called the *Contemporary English Version* (or the CEV).

In doing so, we discover why Jesus has gained a reputation in the eyes of many as the greatest teacher in human history. And we also come face-to-face with the tough questions this teacher asks of us.

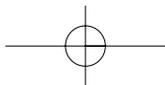
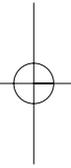
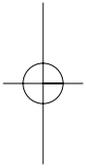
The bits from the Bible we'll be reading all come from Mark's short biography of Jesus (called "Mark's Gospel"—the word *gospel* just means 'good news'). He is one of four blokes who recorded the life of Jesus (the others are Matthew, Luke and John).

The passages have been printed out for you in this book (from both *The Aussie Bible* and the CEV). But you might also like to have a copy of the Bible open in front of you as you work through these studies. The Bible Society has published the CEV under the title of *The Bible for Today*—you can obtain a copy through any bookshop.

In fact, if you've got the time, why not read through the whole of Mark's Gospel in the CEV? It will help you to understand not only the bits we're looking at, but how all the bits fit together in the complete story.

This story has helped to shape countless millions of lives over the last 2,000 years—and it is still changing lives today, and changing them for good.

Kel Richards



Are you so dull?

A mob of Pharisees and lawyers from the Big Smoke (from Jerusalem) circled around Jesus having a go at him because, they said, his team didn't wash their hands before eating their tucker.

(The Pharisees lived the way their Jewish Mommas had taught them to live. They were dead kosher: washing their hands, having a bath after going to the markets, washing their cups and saucers and all the rest of the rules.)

These blokes asked Jesus: "Why's your team not strictly kosher like us? What's so hard about washing your hands already?"

Jesus replied, "Back in the old days Isaiah got it right when he said you're a bunch of shallow show-offs. In God's Book it says: 'their religion is all mouth and no trousers; their religion is a useless show; they flog their own ideas like it's God's truth.' You turn your backs on God and push your own rules.

"Didn't Moses tell you to respect your Mum and Dad? And didn't he say that anyone who didn't was as good as dead? But you twist this by saying that if a bloke's got something that would help his Mum and Dad he can say it's been 'promised to God'—and then he doesn't have to help them. In heaps of ways, just like that, you've twisted God's message with your own little rules."

Jesus called the mob together and said, "Open your ears and pay attention. It's not what goes into your mouth that makes you unclean in God's eyes, but what comes out. Get it?"

After Jesus had slipped into a bungalow away from the mob, his team said they didn't get it, and what did he mean? Jesus said: "Still a bit slow on the uptake, eh? **Are you so dull?** Look, the tucker you eat can't make you unclean—it goes into your tummy (not your heart) then through the guts and down the sewer." By this Jesus meant that all types of tucker was okay to eat.

Then Jesus said:

"It's what comes out of the 'inner you' that makes you unclean. It's inside yourself that you cook up evil thoughts, vulgar deeds, stealing, murder, adultery, greed, meanness, deceit, perving, envy, rudeness, pride, and sheer stupidity. It's this stuff inside your head that looks to God like disgusting filth."

Mark 7:1-23 (*The Aussie Bible*)

¹ Some Pharisees and several teachers of the Law of Moses from Jerusalem came and gathered around Jesus. ² They noticed that some of his disciples ate without first washing their hands.

³ The Pharisees and many others obey the teachings of their ancestors. They always wash their hands in the proper way before eating. ⁴ None of them will eat anything they buy in the market until it is washed. They also follow a lot of other teachings, such as washing cups, jugs, and bowls.

⁵ The Pharisees and teachers asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples obey what our ancestors taught us to do? Why do they eat without washing their hands?”

⁶ Jesus replied:

You are nothing but show-offs! The prophet Isaiah was right when he wrote that God had said,

“All of you praise me with your words,
but you never really think about me.

⁷ It is useless for you to worship me,
when you teach rules made up by humans.”

⁸ You disobey God’s commands in order to obey what humans have taught. ⁹ You are good at rejecting God’s commands so that you can follow your own teachings! ¹⁰ Didn’t Moses command you to respect your father and mother? Didn’t he tell you to put to death all who curse their parents? ¹¹ But you let people get by without helping their parents when they should. You let them say that what they own has been offered to God. ¹² You won’t let those people help their parents. ¹³ And you ignore God’s commands in order to follow your own teaching. You do a lot of other things that are just as bad.

¹⁴ Jesus called the crowd together again and said, “Pay attention and try to understand what I mean. ¹⁵⁻¹⁶ The food that you put into your mouth doesn’t make you unclean and unfit to worship God. The bad words that come out of your mouth are what make you unclean.”

¹⁷ After Jesus and his disciples had left the crowd and had gone into the house, they asked him what these sayings meant. ¹⁸ He answered, “Don’t you know what I am talking about by now? **Are you so dull?** You surely know that the food you put into your mouth cannot make you unclean. ¹⁹ It doesn’t go into your heart, but into your stomach, and then out of your body.” By saying this, Jesus meant that all foods were fit to eat.

²⁰ Then Jesus said:

What comes from your heart is what makes you unclean. ²¹ Out of your heart come evil thoughts, vulgar deeds, stealing, murder, ²² unfaithfulness in marriage, greed, meanness, deceit, indecency, envy, insults, pride, and foolishness. ²³ All of these come from your heart, and they are what make you unfit to worship God.

Mark 7:1-23 (CEV)

Note: The numbered questions can be answered directly from the Bible passage. The ‘Think it Through’ questions help you to think further about what it means.

1 What did the Jewish leaders (the “Pharisees” and the “teachers of the Law of Moses”) object to? (verses 1-5)

2 How did these Jewish leaders try to make themselves acceptable to God (that is, ‘clean’)? (verses 1-5)

THINK IT THROUGH

How do most people try to make themselves acceptable to God?

What food regulations are followed by religious people today?

3 Why does Jesus call the Jewish leaders hypocrites (“show-offs”, “all mouth and no trousers”)? (verses 6-8)

4 What example does Jesus give of their hypocrisy? (verses 9-13)

5 What does Jesus say about religious traditions? (verses 9-13)

THINK IT THROUGH

What are some of the religious traditions of our society?

How do people today use religion to avoid God?

6 Why were those first followers of Jesus so dull? (verse 18)

7 You might have heard people say: “Sure, I’m not perfect. I’ve got my faults. But I’m basically good at heart”. What do you think Jesus would say to them? (verses 14-23)

THINK IT THROUGH

How accurate is Jesus’ assessment of human nature?

Why can’t religious rituals make us acceptable to God?

What hope do we have of being accepted by God?
