

THE TWO WAYS

“Freedom from Defilements”

The concept of defilement is codified in the law of the clean and the unclean (Leviticus 11-25). Remember, the law is the shadow of that which is to come. Being clean meant being ceremonially prepared to serve the Lord.

Leviticus 20:23-26

- 23 And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation, which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them.
- 24 But I have said unto you, Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey: I am the LORD your God, which have separated you from other people.
- 25 Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean: and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast, or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean.
- 26 And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine. KJV¹

Observing the avoidance of unclean things served to differentiate the Israelites from the nations around them and kept them holy unto the Lord.

Matthew 15:1-3, 8-11

- 1 Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,
- 2 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.
- 3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?
- 8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.
- 9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.
- 10 And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand:
- 11 Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

This was revolutionary! Jesus goes to the heart of the matter and explains that defilement has much more to do with what comes out of a man than what goes into him. In other words, it is a heart issue, not a stomach issue.

Matthew 15:12-20

- 12 Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?

¹ All references are from the King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

- 13 But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.
- 14 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.
- 15 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.
- 16 And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? [*NIV – Are you still so dull?*]
- 17 Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?
- 18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.
- 19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:
- 20 These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

It is a sure sign that we are losing our spiritual edge when we try to discern the spiritual condition of a person more by what they wear or eat than what they say. The mouth gives vent to the heart. If the heart is evil, a person will defile their whole life by what they say, for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.²

Mark 7:1-5, 19

- 1 Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.
- 2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault.
- 3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.
- 4 And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables.
- 5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?
- 19 Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

Mark 7:19

For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean.") NIV

Mark 7:19 as it is translated in most modern versions needs some close examination. As it stands in the Authorized Version, it is the process of going out into the draught that the meats are purged. The sense given in the New International Version is presented with much more emphasis in the Amplified Bible.

² Matthew 12:34

Mark 7:19

Since it does not reach and enter his heart but [only his] digestive tract, and so passes on [into the place designed to receive waste]? Thus He was making and declaring all foods [ceremonially] clean [that is, abolishing the ceremonial distinctions of the Levitical Law]. AMP

Jesus came to fulfill the Law. So it would seem incredible to believe that before His atoning sacrifice He would have made a public declaration nullifying a basic principle of that Law and a cornerstone of the Jewish way of life! Mark 7:19 must be understood in its greater context. The question posed was one regarding ceremonial washings (vs. 5). The religious rigors of ceremonial washing were largely prescribed by men, not God. His reply that foods do not make one unclean wasn't a reference to all foods (clean and unclean) but to Torah sanctioned foods that one ate with unwashed hands.

*In Matthew 15:3, Jesus said that the traditions of the Pharisees transgressed the commands of God. How? God had declared certain foods clean. The Pharisees were saying that if one ate these foods with unclean hands, then the food was unclean. Jesus said nonsense. If God said they were clean, then they were **ceremonially** clean regardless of what one did with his hands.³*

Similar to this is a statement in Timothy many use to eat unhealthy foods.

1 Tim 4:1-5

- 1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;
- 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;
- 3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.
- 4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:
- 5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

*This section of Scripture is often pulled out to chastise one who speaks against the eating of pork (pig meat seems to be the most commonly consumed unclean meat). "God says I can pray for it and it is sanctified," they say. But that is not what the verse says. Verse 5 says that the meat is sanctified by **the word of God** and prayer. When Paul wrote this, the term "word of God" primarily meant the Old Testament and in particular it referred to the Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament. What do we find in the Torah? A classification of clean (read sanctified) and unclean meats.*

Mark 7:2, 5

- 2 saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were "unclean," that is, unwashed.
- 5 So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with 'unclean' hands?" NIV

³ After Calvary it is spiritual cleanliness that matters, not ceremonial. That being said, most (if not all) meat declared to be unclean in the Old Testament is not really fit for human consumption. One may eat and not be spiritually contaminated because without the Law there is no trespass. But one will pay the price in the flesh.

From Mark 7:2 we see that unclean (Greek koinos) is the same as unwashed (aniptos) in the context of ceremonial cleanliness. Washing didn't cause the food to be clean or holy. No, the food was holy because it was sanctified by "the word of God and prayer."

Acts 10:1-8

- 1 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band,
- 2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.
- 3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.
- 4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.
- 5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter:
- 6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.
- 7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;
- 8 And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

Cornelius is a Gentile who is seeking the One True God. In response to his prayers, God tells him to send for Peter. Why? Couldn't the angel have told Cornelius about Jesus? It is possible. But I believe God told him to call for Peter because the Lord had some things He wanted to get straight with His apostle.

Acts 10:9-15

- 9 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:
- 10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,
- 11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:
- 12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.
- 13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.
- 14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.
- 15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

Is the Lord trying to feed Peter lunch or give him a message? He's trying to communicate with Peter in a radical fashion. Acts 10 is several years after the ascension. We are in the Church Age, the time of the New Covenant. But notice that Peter is still keeping kosher. "Not so, Lord," he says, "You know that I have never eaten anything unclean." And the voice then tells him not to call unclean what He has cleansed. Is the Lord talking about the meat? No, He hadn't cleansed the meat. But He was getting ready to clean up the Gentiles – who the Jews considered to be unclean.

Acts 10:17-21, 34-36

17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,

18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?

34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

By calling Peter to eat unclean meat, the Lord was preparing him to minister salvation to the Gentiles. After all, if the Lord set the table, the meats thereon would have His implicit permission to eat for He would have provided them. "What God calls clean call not thou unclean." Conversely, it would be unwise for us to call clean what God has called unclean. The message of Acts 10 is the cleansing of the Gentiles.

Hebrews 9:13-14

13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

The law offered outward cleansing and thus pointed prophetically to the inward washing that Jesus would accomplish by His ultimate sacrifice. Food, in the same manner, was an external ordinance pointing to an internal truth. Pig flesh was not what the world needed cleansing from, sin was. The blood of Christ is the means by which we are cleansed if we have become defiled with sin. Defilement occurs in our conscience when we perform acts that lead to death.

Numbers 19:13, 20

13 Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him.

20 But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the LORD: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean.

Ephesians 5:25-26

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

I am certain that there is much to learn regarding defilements by studying the law of the clean and the unclean. We will look at some below. But an exhaustive study is outside of the bounds of this teaching. But a primary principle we need to note is that one cited in the verses above. For there to be cleansing, the water of cleansing must be applied. The blood covered the sin, offering redemption for the worshipper. The water of cleansing made service to God and access to the tabernacle available. After being cleansed by the blood of Jesus, let us not neglect the washing water of the Word to make us fit for His service.

Romans 14:14

I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

No food is morally defiling (or defiled) in and of itself. But if I approach the food as unclean, then it is unclean. If I then eat the unclean food, my conscience becomes defiled. We need to look at this verse in its context.

Romans 13:8-14

8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

It is necessary that we wake from our slumber and walk in love toward our neighbor.

Ephesians 5:11-18

11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

13 But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

Luke 9:32 shows us that when we wake from our slumber, we see His glory. The term translated “to awake” in Romans 13:11 is the Greek word egeiro. It’s primarily used to refer to Jesus rising from the dead. Sleepers in the New Testament are those who are found not watching in prayer. Could it be that when we arise in prayer we connect to the resurrection power of Jesus Christ?

1 Thessalonians 5:6-11

6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

In Thessalonians, being asleep is correlated to being drunk (vs. 7) and being dead (vs. 10). We are to be sober and watchful. Sober is self-controlled and watchful is prayerful. We do this while putting on love and faith as a breastplate and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

2 Timothy 4:5

But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

1 Peter 1:13

Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. NIV

Again, having our hope set helps us be self-controlled. Looking forward to the wine of the wedding supper of the Lamb helps us avoid the wine of drunkenness now.

1 Peter 4:7

But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

We need to be sober to pray.

1 Peter 5:8-11

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

11 To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

We need to be sober so that we don’t become prey to the enemy.

Now we can look at Romans 14.

Romans 14

- 1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.
- 2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.
- 3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.
- 4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.
- 5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.
- 6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.
- 7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.
- 8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.
- 9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.
- 10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.
- 11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.
- 12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.
- 13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.
- 14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.
- 15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.
- 16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of:
- 17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.
- 18 For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.
- 19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.
- 20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.
- 21 It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.
- 22 Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.
- 23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

The issues of meats offered to idols and the drinking of wine are issues of love, not diet. When we walk in love, we fulfill the law. We need to walk in faith and not put a stumbling block in our brother's path. It is unbelief that defiles, not the meat.

Ezekiel 14:1-11

- 1 Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me.
- 2 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 3 Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them?
- 4 Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;
- 5 That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.
- 6 Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.
- 7 For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to inquire of him concerning me; I the LORD will answer him by myself:
- 8 And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.
- 9 And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the LORD have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.
- 10 And they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity: the punishment of the prophet shall be even as the punishment of him that seeketh unto him;
- 11 That the house of Israel may go no more astray from me, neither be polluted any more with all their transgressions; but that they may be my people, and I may be their God, saith the Lord GOD.

It is the idols of the heart that defile. If we approach the Lord with idols in our hearts, He will answer in accordance to the idols we have set up. In essence, if after reproof we fail to repent, God will begin to tell us what we want to hear that our blood may be upon our own heads. I think of Micaiah prophesying to the king of Israel and the king of Judah.

1 Kings 22:15

So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, Go, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king.

These kings were consulting the prophet when their course was already mostly decided. Accordingly, the Lord answered them (specifically, answered the king of Israel) in accordance to the idol of their heart.

To be fully cleansed of our defilements, we need to apply the blood of Jesus by confessing our sins. Then we need to cleanse ourselves for service by bathing our souls in the Word of God. Finally, we need to go on the offensive by the Spirit.

2 Kings 23:10, 13-15

10 And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.

13 And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile.

14 And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men.

15 Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove.

Josiah defiled the high places by walking by the Spirit. We can defile the idols of our hearts.

Isaiah 30:20-23

20 And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers:

21 And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

22 Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.

23 Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures.

Galatians 5:16-18

16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Isaiah 30:21 is as succinct a passage about walking by the Spirit of God as one will find in all of Scripture. Verse 22 records the result of obeying the Spirit's voice: our idols are defiled and thrown away. This is a direct attack on demonic strongholds, for idols are nothing but demons (1 Cor. 10:19-20).

When we walk by the Spirit, we will not fulfill the works of the flesh. Then we will be free of the law for we will be bound to Him.