



## *For Further Study*

Read and meditate on the passage below:

<sup>20</sup> He went on: “What comes out of a person is what defiles them. <sup>21</sup> For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, <sup>22</sup> adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. <sup>23</sup> All these evils come from inside and defile a person.”  
(Mark 7:20-23)

This passage comes from Mark’s collection of stories about Jesus that teach a unified message of his inclusive love and salvation for all people. Because of his love, he wants us to experience the best and most abundant lives.

In these verses, Jesus emphasizes that what comes out (through our words and actions) stem from what is inside of us. Thus, the “heart” is a metaphor of our entire being. When it is corrupted by evil desires to cause harm (such as sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly), we are on a self-destructive path. These harmful attitudes and actions not only hurt others but they defile and destroy us too.

Conversely, when we focus on God’s attributes (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control) we experience the most fulfilling and rewarding way to live, bringing joy and meaningfulness to others and ourselves (John 10:10).

So, as followers of Jesus who strive to live as his disciples in this world, we need to align our hearts with God’s heart and seek to avoid these evil desires. When we fall short, we should recalibrate on the things of God, striving to live in such a way that his kingdom becomes an increasing reality on earth in a way that reflects its heavenly origin.

**PRACTICE:**  
Evaluate your heart for  
evil that needs  
cleansed and removed.

