

ReFocus Guide: From the Inside Out

Focus:

Following Jesus means allowing God to transform our hearts—not just our appearances. This week invites us to look honestly at what shapes our inner life and to begin the process of transformation from the inside out.

Day 1: Lip Service or Heart Transformation?

Scripture: Matthew 15:8-9

This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from me.—Matthew 15:8 (CEB)

Reflection: Jesus isn't impressed by religious language or external rituals. He's looking for hearts that are truly open to Him. We can say all the right things and still miss the mark if our words don't reflect a heart shaped by love, mercy, and humility. Empty words lead to empty worship—but when our hearts align with God's, our worship becomes alive.

Questions:

When have you caught yourself saying the right thing without meaning it? What would it look like to offer your whole heart to God this week?

Prayer:

God, I don't want my faith to be a performance. Help me to worship You with a heart that is close to Yours. Shape me to speak and act out of Your truth. Amen

Day 2: What Shapes Your Heart

Scripture: Matthew 15:3, 6

You do away with God's Law for the sake of the rules that have been handed down to you. – Matthew 15:6 (CEB)

Reflection: The Pharisees clung to tradition over transformation. Their rules were not evil in themselves, but they replaced God's heart with human habits. We all inherit beliefs, habits, and defenses from our culture, family, or past pain. Jesus invites us to examine what's been forming our hearts and to let Him reshape them.

Questions:

What rules or assumptions have shaped your behavior more than God's Word? How might God be inviting you to unlearn something so that you can be transformed?

Prayer:

Transformative God, send the Holy Spirit to reveal the patterns and assumptions that have pulled me away from Your heart. Help me let go of what doesn't reflect You. Amen.

Day 3: The Heart Revealed

Scripture: Matthew 15:10-11

It's not what goes into the mouth... but what comes out of the mouth that contaminates a person – Matthew 15:11 (CEB)

Reflection: Jesus wants us to stop focusing on appearances and start paying attention to what flows from our hearts. Our words, reactions, and attitudes are not accidental—they reveal what's inside. Rather than policing our behavior, Jesus invites us to allow the Holy Spirit to shape our hearts so that what flows out of us reflects love and grace.

Questions:

What does your speech or attitude revealed about what's going on inside? How can you respond with curiosity instead of shame?

Prayer:

Jesus, help me to look honestly at what's flowing from my heart. Don't let me hide behind good behavior. Instead, transform me at the source. Amen.

Day 4: The Root of the Issue

Scripture: Matthew 15:18-19

What goes out of the mouth comes from the heart... – Matthew 15:18a (CEB)

Reflection: Our actions are not random. Jesus teaches that sin begins in the heart—not the physical organ, but the core of our being. When we act out of fear, insecurity, or pride, it's often a sign of unhealed wounds or false beliefs. But when we invite God into those hidden places, He can begin the work of restoration.

Questions:

What fears or insecurities tend to drive your words or actions?

Where do you need God's restorative healing today?

Prayer:

God, You see the parts of me I try to hide. Heal the places where fear, pain, or pride take root. Let my heart reflect Your love. Amen.

Day 5: Living for the Inside Out**Scripture:** Matthew 15:20 (CEB)

These contaminate a person in God's sight. But eating without washing hands doesn't...

Reflection: The religious leaders were more concerned with appearances than with integrity. Jesus flips the script: God cares about what's within. True discipleship begins when we commit to the long, sometimes hard, but deeply freeing work of inner transformation. When we let God change us from the inside out, our lives begin to look more like Christ's, honest, compassionate, and whole.

Questions:

Where are you tempted to focus on image instead of motivation?

What's one small act today that can come from the transformation that has been done in you?

Prayer:

Jesus, I want my life to reflect who You are. Help me stop managing appearances and start living from a heart transformed by Your love. Amen.