

The Bible distinguishes between the externals and the internals of a human life. For example, when the prophet Samuel was choosing a king to replace Saul from among Jesse's sons, God told him not to look at the outward appearance but at the heart of the candidates. (1 Samuel 16:7) Likewise, when the Pharisees criticized Jesus' disciples for not washing their hands and eating utensils at mealtime, Jesus said it was not the outward condition of a man that made him unclean, but the heart. (Mark 7:1-23)

Jesus said: "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts". (Mark 7:21-23) His words call to mind the words of one of Israel's greatest prophets, Jeremiah, who said that *above all* the human heart is "deceitful" and "desperately wicked". The solution to a deceitful heart is not to wash one's hands, but to receive the gift of a new heart from God. Such a gift comes when one is born again by the Spirit of God.

Therefore, *above all*, seek the "clean heart" that can only come by the grace of God. (Psalm 51:10)

Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"