



NOTES FOR FURTHER STUDY

**Supplemental Texts**

Gen. 4:8; Lev. 19:18-27; 30-33; Num. 18:21; 19:16; Due. 6:5; 14:22-29; 1 Kings 19:10, 14; 2 Chr. 24:20-25; Jer. 7:25-26; Ezek. 2:3-8; Hosea 6:6; 12:6; Amos 5:15; Mic. 6:8; Matt. 9:9-13; 11:28-30; 12:7-8; 12:10, 13, 38-40; 13:33; 16:5-12; 22:34-40; 23:1-7, 13-39; Mark 4:21-25; 7:1-23; 12:13, 28-34, 38-40; Luke 5:27-31; 7:13, 36-43; 8:16-18; 11:33-36; 12:20, 33-34; 14:1-24; 15:2; 19:5-7; 24:25-27; 1 Cor. 4:3-5; 5:6-8; James 2:14-17

**Study Summary**

In this passage Jesus is invited to lunch at a Pharisee's house, who becomes astonished when he discovers that Jesus does not follow the traditions of the scribes and Pharisees in washing before mealtime. This leads Jesus into a scathing denouncement of the self-righteous ways of Israel's teachers, concluding with a command for His disciples to not fall into the dangers of hypocrisy.

**Historical & Theological Background**

**Cleanliness Laws:** Being unclean meant you couldn't enter the temple and worship with the community. In the law there were many ways to become unclean (bodily discharge, touching a dead body) and ritual cleansing (washing) was required. The washings were a visual aid that showed the people of Israel that they were spiritually and morally unclean and couldn't enter God's Presence unless there was spiritual purification. The law required hand washing only for priests eating the holy food and ministering in the temple (Ex. 30:18-21). Because of the Pharisee's desire to sanctify all life, they extended the law to include not just priests but all people. This is only one example of how the Pharisees and teachers of the law went beyond God's law in their own commandments, which became burdensome to those who tried to follow them as well as a distraction from the heart of God and His plan of redemption.

**Graves:** "To come into contact with a grave was to incur ceremonial defilement. A problem was posed by the fact that people were sometimes buried in unmarked graves and the unwary traveller could easily walk over such a grave and all unwittingly contract ceremonial defilement. There is irony in the comparison of the religious Pharisees, who thought so well of themselves, to these unsuspected sources of defilement. People who walked over unmarked graves became ceremonially unclean. And people who walked in the teaching and ways of the Pharisees became morally unclean."

**Tithing:** "Tithing was commanded in the Law (Lev. 27:30; Deut. 14:22, etc.). It was meant to be a joyful offering of love, but this calculation of one tenth of all the stalks of garden herbs made a burdensome mockery of it. Actually this kind of detail was not required by the Law, while the Mishnah expressly lays it down that rue, at any rate, was exempt from the tithe (*Shebiith* 9:1). The Pharisees were going beyond what was required. There was nothing actually wrong in doing this and Jesus does not say that they should not have done it. But when people concentrate on the trivial they are apt to overlook the important. The condemnation of the Pharisees lay, not in the fact that they tithed herbs, but that in their zeal for trifles they neglected *justice and the love of God.*"

**The Blood of the Prophets:** "Chronologically, Zechariah was not the last OT prophet to be killed, but in the Hebrew arrangement of the OT books, Zechariah's death is the last murder recorded in the OT canon." Therefore, as redemption comes to its climax in Jesus, so too does the evil and violence perpetuated against God's prophets throughout the story of redemption come to its climax among those who oppose Jesus, the Prophet to whom all others point.

**Leaven:** "Leaven speaks of a penetration that is slow, insidious and constant," as it transforms a whole lump of dough. "In this case the leaven is *hypocrisy*. The practice of saying one thing and doing another eats at the moral life like a canker."

[Works referenced and cited: Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*; Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*; Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible*, GE DA. Carson; Kings Cross, Timothy Keller]

DISCUSSION PRIMER

Take some time this week to read Luke 11:37-12:3 slowly and prayerfully. Ask yourself these questions: What is hypocrisy and how might it be manifesting in my life? What might I be trying to hide? From whom? How might I more fully embrace the life of grace God has saved me into?

TEXTUAL INVESTIGATION

LUKE 11:37-12:3

**Big Idea: What Is Hidden Will Be Revealed**

**Fallen Condition Focus: Self-Righteousness and Pride**

- What amazes the Pharisee who invited Jesus to dine with him (38)? (See HTB)
- How does Jesus rebuke the Pharisees in 39-42? What is so important about generosity to the poor? (See Mic. 6:8, Mark 12:28-34, James 2:14-17 & HTB)
- What do the Pharisee's desires in 43 reveal about the condition of their hearts?
- What does it mean that the Pharisees are like unmarked graves (44)? (See HTB)
- How do the experts in the law burden the people (46)? (See HTB)
- How is Jesus' current generation like the evil generations of old (47-51)? (See HTB)
- What key is Jesus speaking of in 52 and how did the excerpts take it away? (See Matt. 23:13-15, Luke 24:25-27 & HTB)
- Why does Jesus use the metaphor of leaven in 12:1? (See 1 Cor. 5:6-8 and HTB)
- What is disconcerting about 12:2-3? What is comforting?

**Gospel Connection:** Read Matt. 13:33. What is the meaning of this parable? How does the Kingdom work like leaven for the good?

TEXTUAL INTERSECTION: How does the text intersect with our lives?

- How are the self-righteous and prideful ways of the Pharisees perpetuated in today's society? Both liberal and conservative? Moral and immoral?
- Why is hypocrisy so dangerous? (Luke 12:1 & 1 Cor. 5:6-8)
- Do you ever find yourself acting hypocritically? In what ways does it manifest in your life? How does it affect you and others?
- How does generosity help us combat self-righteousness and pride (41)? Use examples from your own life.
- Do you ever find yourself seeking the praise of others? Depending on your own track-record of good deeds? Why or why not? How might the words of Jesus in 12:2-3 help us combat such habits? (See 1 Cor. 4:3-5)
- How is God challenging you to embrace more fully a gospel-centered life?

REPLICABLE QUESTIONS

Read *Luke 11:37-12:3* and explore together what the passage reveals about:

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|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1) The character and purposes of God? | 4) Our identity in Christ?    |
| 2) The fallen human condition?        | 5) Our obedience to Christ?   |
| 3) The gospel of Jesus Christ?        | 6) Our relationship to others |

TEXTUAL APPLICATION: "So, what now?"

Have each participant identify a personal take-away in light of this study. Is there . . .

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|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| • a command to obey?  | • a beauty to behold?  | • a mission to fulfill? |
| • a promise to claim? | • a truth to believe?  | • an example to follow? |
| • a sin to repent of? | • a service to render? | • a person to tell?     |