



# SPORTS IN FOCUS

THE SERVANT BROADENS HIS MINISTRY

Mark 7:1-8:38 • Lesson Six

## READY

- What pregame traditions or rituals do you practice? How are they helpful?
- What religious traditions or rituals do you practice? Which of these are helpful to you?

## SET

### Context of Mark 7:1-8:38

In this next portion of Mark, we see the antithetical nature of the gospel message in Jesus' teaching. The God of compassion is also the God of condemnation. He heals those who come to Him, but He condemns those who reject Him. These chapters describe the growing confrontation between Jesus and Israel's religious leaders and also His condemnation of the unbelieving and rebellious scribes and Pharisees. Ironically, the most religious people of the day had the least faith in Christ, even as so many religious outcasts trusted and obeyed Him.

### Keys to Text

*Sin:* Jesus said, "Evil things proceed from within and defile the man." This is the doctrine of total depravity or "original sin." This means sinners have no ability to do spiritual good or work for their own salvation from sin.

## GO

### Read Mark 7:1-8:38

1. Why were the scribes and Pharisees upset with Jesus and His disciples? According to Jesus what are the dangers of human tradition?
2. Some have accused Jesus of being indifferent, almost rude, to the Syro-Phoenician woman with the sick daughter. What really happened in this exchange?
3. How are the disciples described in these two chapters? What good qualities do you see?
4. In a feel-good era marked by an aversion to commitment, some would say that Jesus' challenge here is not very user-friendly, that it is not exactly the best way to gain a following. What do Jesus' words mean to would-be followers?
5. Why were the disciples so slow to catch on to Jesus' purpose? What is the lesson here?
6. What (if any) human religious traditions do you see that tend to keep you from a closer relationship with Christ?

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The British missionary statesman C. T. Studd once remarked, "If Jesus Christ be God, and He died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him." How does a life of sacrificial discipleship differ from a life of meaningless religious rituals?

China's Shen Xue and Zhao Hongbo became the first Chinese figure skaters to win gold in the 2010 Olympics. In their fourth Olympics, Shen and Zhao, two-time bronze medalists, finally won their first gold. Skating together for the past 18 years and married three years ago after winning the 2007 world title, Shen, 31, and Zhao, 36, were the oldest skaters. Few Olympic athletes have made such great sacrifices. How does this example relate to the topic of sacrificial discipleship? The New testament makes it clear that there must be a cross before the crown, suffering before glory, sacrifice before reward. The heart of Christian discipleship is giving before gaining, losing before winning.