

“Unclean”
Lev 15 and Mark 5
Small Group Discussion Guide

Opening Question (get everyone involved in discussion): Today we’re talking about clean and unclean. How much of a “clean” person are you? Do you like the experience of getting dirty, i.e., for yard work, or sport, or a hobby, or do you need to be clean all the time?

Transition: We’re in a sermon series called “Eavesdropping.” When you read the OT laws, many of them sound so archaic and strange that you can’t imagine what they could possibly have to do with our lives today. It’s like we’re eavesdropping on communication meant for some other people in some other time. Today we’re going to tackle one of the most perplexing aspects of this difficult concept. *It may feel awkward when we get into it, but where it will take us is a place of hope that could bring just the kind of breakthrough that you’ve been waiting for.*

Read Leviticus 15:25-31. *(If the material is too uncomfortable for your group to read aloud, feel read to have the group read it silently in their Bibles.)*

- What is your first reaction to reading this passage?
- In a society that existed around 3500 years ago, comparably little was known about medicine and disease. How might cleanliness laws help the Hebrew society medically?
- In verses 28-29, what were the two conditions to returning to community? Why do you think this was important?
- Do these two conditions of returning to community and relationship remind you of any conditions or principles spiritually? If so what and why is it important?
- Pastor Josh described humankind’s ultimate issue:
“We believe somewhere deep inside that God can’t really be trusted, that he’s not really for us, and that if we’re going to have the good life, we have to seize it for ourselves. That’s the heart of our brokenness. This corruption brings damage in our human relationships and in our relationship with God, and no matter how hard we try, we are not going to fix it.”
 - Does this statement bring up any emotions for you? Explain.
 - No one trusts God 100%. Where do you think your trust level is right now and why?
- Josh provides some examples of where we might be with respect to this issue. Can you relate to any of these? Discuss.
 - pain and brokenness caused by other people’s treatment of us;
 - your own choices have caused dysfunction and brokenness in your life and your relationships;
 - some of you who have a hard time seeing your own brokenness;

Read Mark 5:25-34

- Here we have a woman who has a **chronic uterine hemorrhage**. On top of being physically worn down by this condition, she had spent all her money on various doctors with no success, and she had no relational support because being unclean meant that

she had to live in isolation for as long as she had the condition.

- How would you feel if you were in her situation, or... Are you now or ever been in a similar long-term medical situation? How has that affected you spiritually and emotionally?

- Can you imagine living as an outcast from society and labeled as “unclean” for 12 years!?

- How is this woman’s condition a picture of our relationship with God pre-Christ? Do you feel like this is too strong of a metaphor or appropriate?

- What was the woman’s attitude going in – was it faith or desperation, or both? Is there a relationship between the two?
- Knowing OT laws about cleanliness and seeing the woman’s reaction to being found out, how would you think a religious leader of that day (Pharisee, Sadducee, etc.) would react to a woman touching him?
- Are there any groups of people today towards whom you feel uncomfortable even though they pose no real threat? Minorities? Homeless? Socially awkward? Be honest.
- However, what was Jesus’ reaction to her? What does that tell you about Jesus?
- Jesus not only healed her physically, but what did he do in this passage to restore her relationship to God and her community? Why was that important then? Why is it important to us now? Are you in a position of influence or power, where you could help someone experience the social or communal restoration that Jesus gave her?
- Jesus had power GO OUT OF HIM, rather than having the contagion come into him. He had the opposite effect from the norm. What does this tell you about him?
- Josh summarizes: **You don’t have to get clean to come to Jesus. You come to him and he pronounces you clean.** Where does this principle touch you today?
 - Do you have some “**uncleanness**” (sin or brokenness) that you need to bring to God?
 - Are you bleeding from a **wound**—self-inflicted, or from someone else?
 - Do you need to **believe what Jesus says about you** more than what others say about you – that you are clean, acceptable, and loved?
 - Do you need to be more willing to associate with and embrace **other people who are obviously broken**?

Let’s move into Prayer

- Among our prayer requests, let’s pray that God might show us our brokenness and transform it. Let’s live the truth that we are clean, healed, and restored to relationship by Christ’s substitutionary death for our “uncleanness.”