Session 7: Mark 6:30–8:30	
SESSION GOALS	
Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.	
Main Idea : Because of his unique power as creator, Jesus renews and restores what sin and darkness broke.	
Head Change: To understand Jesus's character and mission.	
Heart Change: To feel excited at Jesus's ability to equip us to follow him.	
Life Change: To live in light of our knowledge of who Jesus is and what he's about.	
<u>OPEN</u>	
There's something attractive about power. We like the freedom it gives us, the ability to do whatever we wish. Or so we think. What sort of position do you hold that gives you power over someone else? And where is the limit to that power?	
Jesus, in this passage, is going to demonstrate real power, the kind that defies natural law and remakes religious law. Pay attention to those who benefit from his power.	
READ	
Read Mark 6:30–8:30.	

WATCH	
Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Francis's teaching.	
As you watch, pay attention to how he answers	
the following questions:	
What sort of power does Jesus have over the brokenness in our world?	
Who or what is responsible for our sin?	
How do believers come to understand the truth of the gospel? Through whose power does Jesus become clear in our minds?	
Show Session 7: Mark 6:30–8:30 (15 minutes)	
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DISCUSS	
Francis visited the site where scholars believe Jesus multiplied the fish and loaves to feed over 5,000 people. Jesus was in high demand during those days. After his apostles had returned from	
their missionary outing, they tried to get away for a break. But the crowds followed, and Jesus showed compassion for them.	
Look at Mark 6:34–37. How would you	
characterize Jesus's response to having his	
recharge time interrupted?	
He spends a full day teaching, then directs his	
followers to feed the crowd who had not eaten all day. Read 6:38–44. How did the apostles '	
attitude differ from their master's?	
Evancie notes the cignificance of the mire de of the	
Francis notes the significance of the miracle of the bread and fish. What difference does it make	
that Jesus can create something out of nothing?	

[Note: For further study on the significance of bread being made from nothing, see Go Deeper	
section 1 at the end of this session.]	
Now read Mark 6:45–56. What parts of the created world does Jesus display mastery	
over?	
Read Mark 7:1–23.	
The Pharisees prove yet again that Jesus's	
miracles and teaching have not made an impact	
on their own thinking. Note the timing of their complaint about the disciples' unwashed hands.	
complaint about the disciples anwashed harlas.	
Why does Jesus rebuke the Pharisees in 7:6–	
13? In what ways are they hypocrites?	
[Note: For further study on the significance of a	
person's ceremonial cleanness, see Go Deeper	
section 2 at the end of this session.]	
Consider your own righteousness. Have you	
added self-made "rules" that reveal someone's	
deeper holiness, in your sight? In what ways have you added to the gospel, like the	
Pharisees did?	
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Jesus clarifies what defiles a person in Mark 7:14– 23. Francis noted that we often make the same	
mistake, blaming all sorts of external issues for	
our sin, as opposed to realizing the real issue is	
within our hearts. We have to change from the inside out. What "external" things are you	
blaming your sin on? What has to happen for	
you to allow Jesus to change your heart?	
As we dive into chapter 8, note that Mark	
purposely organized his gospel to emphasize	

Jesus's power. This week's section shows repetition of key events: 6:30–7:37 mirrors nearly identically 8:1–30. We see two miraculous feedings, two sea trips, two confrontations with the Pharisees, two object lessons with food, two sets of healings, and two declarations of faith in Jesus.	
Read Mark 8:1–10.	
In what ways is this miracle of feeding the four thousand similar to feeding the five thousand in Mark 6:30–44? How are these two miracles different?	
Read Mark 8:11–21.	
After reiterating the results of both of his multiplication miracles in Mark 8:20–21, Jesus asks, "Do you not yet understand?" You can almost feel the sadness and confusion coming off the page. After all he's done, how can the disciples still not understand who Jesus is? But before we jump to condemn the disciples, how do we, too, respond to Jesus in a similar way? Do you live in a way that exhibits a clear understanding of who Jesus is and what he's done for you?	
Read Mark 8:22–30.	
In Mark 8:22–26, a man comes to Jesus to have his blindness healed—fairly routine, right? But it takes Jesus two tries to get him seeing again.	
Before we start to wonder if Jesus somehow flubbed the miracle, notice that we've seen throughout the whole passage: two of everything. Mark's doubling-down effect comes to a point	

here. It takes two intentional actions on Jesus's part for the man to see clearly. After restoring sight to the blind man at Bethsaida, and the "double effort" we've seen in this week's passage, Jesus asks his disciples an important question in Mark 8:27–30. What does he hope his disciples see clearly?	
Do they?	
In what ways do you feel you see Jesus more clearly now? How does this passage increase your understanding of him and his mission?	
LAST WORD	
Next week's study is going to put Peter's confession to the test. In fact, Mark 8:22–30 forms the first of two bookends making the point that Jesus wants his followers to see clearly—not just who he is, but what his mission ultimately is. Throughout our passage this week, Jesus has	
been teaching the disciples important lessons about not only what he's doing in the world, but also how he wants them to live. Mark gives us a repeated set of stories to double-down on the point—discipleship is all about living the way Jesus lived.	
But living in faithful obedience to Jesus starts with surrendering our hearts to him. Francis reminded us that it's not so much about what we do, but more about the condition of our hearts.	
As we conclude today's lesson, take a moment as a group to be silent before God. Have you allowed Jesus to change your heart? What areas of your life are you still holding on to? If	

you feel comfortable doing so, have a few people share with the group.	
GO DEEPER	
The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material. We've highlighted a place where each of the following segments could fit in the Discuss section of the study guide.	
But you can also use these sections as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting.	
1. Background: Bread Made from Nothing	
By including both scenes of Jesus feeding the multitudes, Mark assumes that his readers are familiar with their Old Testament. Let's look back at an important Old Testament passage that should help understand the nuances of Mark 7–8.	
Turn to Exodus 16:9–21. This section picks up after God rescued Israel from slavery in Egypt. The people started complaining pretty quickly, though, because they were out in the middle of the wilderness.	
As you read the passage in Exodus, what sounds familiar to what you've read in Mark? (Think specifically about the location where Jesus takes the disciples prior to feeding the five thousand.)	
What do you think the people eating the bread Jesus had just multiplied would have thought?	

If Jesus is re-creating the something-out-of-	
nothing provision that Israel saw in the wilderness, what does that say about Jesus?	
Jesus's provision through miraculous bread	
should immediately clue us in to two things: First, Jesus is God-in-the-flesh and he will provide for	
his followers. But second, he's not about simply	
satisfying our cravings. As the passage in Exodus goes on, God's frustration with Israel grows	
because, rather than trust him to provide, they ignore his instructions and try to take advantage	
of his provisions.	
In the same way, Mark presents the Pharisees in	
chapter 7 as also taking advantage of God's generosity, using their own legal traditions to	
ignore caring for elderly parents.	
So, as you sit down to eat your next meal, stop	
and pray for a moment. In your prayer celebrate the provision that Jesus offers you—not just in	
the food you're about to eat, but also in the	
resources you need to be about his mission.	
In what ways have you been tempted to take	
God's generosity for granted? Discuss or write down actionable ideas about how to practice	
gratitude.	
2. Background: Ceremonial Cleanness	
The Pharisees attacked Jesus and his followers for eating without first washing their hands. Mothers	
everywhere may applaud them, but Jesus rebuked	
them. Why? The Pharisees were focused on the	
wrong thing. They were not so much concerned about cleanliness—as in, not carrying dirt or	
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germs—but rather cleanness, a term describing ritual suitability.	
The concept of cleanness goes back to the Law of Moses, in which God instituted conditions on how he could be approached. To be in God's presence, a person needs to be in a state of holiness. A person who is clean is in a state of holiness; therefore, becoming clean is essential for entering into the presence of God. Likewise, anything that makes a person unclean separates that person from God.	
Generally, anything associated with health or life would be designated as clean. For example, a perfect one-year-old lamb was an acceptable sacrifice, but a lamb that was lame—or nearer to death, less than perfect—was unacceptable. If something or someone was unhealthy or associated with death, they were unclean. Skin diseases, illnesses, touching a corpse, or participating in sinful activities all could make a person temporarily unclean.	
An unclean person could go through a process to become clean—make a suitable sacrifice (Leviticus 1:3–17), allow the right amount of time to pass (Lev. 15:19), participate in a symbolic ceremony, such as a ritual washing (Exodus 30:17–21). This was likely what the apostles did not do before eating, prompting the Pharisees' complaint.	
In the Gospels, we see Jesus change the rules: he touched the unclean personally to cleanse and purify them, illustrating that he holds the power to transform the lives of individuals. Jesus's touch healed or restored dead people (Mark 5:21–24, 35–43), those with skin diseases (Mark 1:40–45), even those suffering an unnatural blood flow (Mark 5:25–34) to a state of cleanness.	

In Mark 7:15, Jesus proclaimed that nothing going into a person can make that individual unclean—only things coming out of a person. In this passage Jesus abolished the defiling physical and animal aspects that made a person unclean.	
He confronted the religious leaders by exposing their hypocrisy: they were very concerned about how the people followed every tiny regulation, which could be trumpeted about to show their "righteousness." They were too busy looking good to prioritize actually doing good: they were	
neglecting the commandments of God to love their neighbors, honor their parents, uphold justice, protect the vulnerable.	
Consider your spiritual life. How are you busy following the rules, spoken or unspoken, in your faith tradition?	
How have you unwittingly added conditions to your righteousness, behaving as if adherence to traditions or rules will determine how pleased God is with you?	
It's easy to mask our inner motivations with outward activities. Think of your church or family life. What sort of actions look righteous? Now, how can a person engage in those while inwardly being unrighteous? When have you done this? How can you avoid such double-mindedness in the future?	

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Members of the RightNow team involved in creating this video Bible study and study guide include:

Brian Mosley: President

Phil Warner: VP, Video Production

Paul Lanum: VP, Publishing & Conferences

Matt Wood: VP, Marketing Jackie Mosley: Sr. Publisher Will Irwin: Sr. Producer Josh Holden: Sr. Producer

Chad Madden: Sr. Producer, Cinematography Mark Blitch: Producer, Cinematography

Brendon Lankford: Producer
Bradley Van Strien: Field Producer
Courtney Davis: Field Producer
Jason Jean: Field Producer
Clint Loveness: Field Producer

Cameron Rhodes: Field Producer, Cinematography, Colorist Lee Sherman: Field Producer, After Effects Compositing

Austin James: Field Producer Lindsey Bynum: Field Producer Lindsie Herring: Field Producer Mark Weaver: Field Producer

Jed Ostoich: Associate Publisher, Writer

Collin Huber: Writer
Kelley Mathews: Writer
Sophie DeMuth: Copy Editor
Mike Marshall: Creative Director
Jeff Smith: Graphic Designer
Jared Tohlen: Graphic Designer
Mateo Boyd: Graphic Designer