

HOMWORK FOR LIVING—Discussion guide (Mark 8:1-21)

REMEMBERING

1. Share the story of a person you had difficulty trusting due to your lack of understanding them, but that you grew to trust over time.

REFLECTING

2. What insights from others and/or further experiences helped you to understand and trust this person more?

DISCOVERING

3. Read Mark 8:1-21 below and answer the questions that follow.

During those days another large crowd gathered. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, ²“I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. ³If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance.” ⁴His disciples answered, “But where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them?” ⁵“How many loaves do you have?” Jesus asked. “Seven,” they replied. ⁶He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. When he had taken the seven loaves and given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people, and they did so. ⁷They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them. ⁸The people ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ⁹About four thousand men were present. And having sent them away, ¹⁰he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha.

¹¹The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven. ¹²He sighed deeply and said, “Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to it.” ¹³Then he left them, got back into the boat and crossed to the other side.

¹⁴The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat. ¹⁵“Be careful,” Jesus warned them.

“Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod.” ¹⁶They discussed this with one another and said, “It is because we have no bread.” ¹⁷Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: “Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? ¹⁸Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? ¹⁹When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?” “Twelve,” they replied. ²⁰“And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?” They answered, “Seven.” ²¹He said to them, “Do you still not understand?”

- What story developments or descriptions help you get to know the most about Jesus and what do they reveal?
- What is the most encouraging, comforting, or hopeful aspect of this story for you?

CONNECTING

4. What issues are you currently wrestling with where you may hear Jesus whispering, “Trust me,” but are finding it difficult to do so?

RESPONDING

5. What specific steps will you take in the coming week to help yourself understand the meaning of his words or reflect on the significance of your experiences that would lead you to trust more?

He that studies only men, will get the body of knowledge without the soul; and he that studies only books, the soul without the body. He that to what he sees, adds observation, and to what he reads, reflection, is on the right road to knowledge, provided that in scrutinizing the hearts of others, he neglects not his own.

- Caleb Colton, quoted in *Celebration of Discipline*