



For the Week of April 15, 2012

Good Questions, Straight Answers:  
hard words

Daily Life Notes for Individuals & Couples

## Introductions

Welcome to this week's **Life Notes**. This week, we'll be concentrating on Jesus, the bread of life!

The passages selected by Pastor Mark this week are copied below in their entirety, but it's great to use your own Bible so you can make note of things that interest you or speak to you in some way. It's always good to read a passage at least twice, so that your mind begins to get involved with what the Holy Spirit is saying. It's also great to read a second version so you can compare what's going on. The following is the NIV. You can view various Bible versions online at sites like [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)

**Note:** Saturday is used as a "sabbath" or "rest from our every day work responsibilities" experience, but you might work on Saturday and be off some other time during the week that would be more appropriate to celebrating rest. Please feel free to adjust the **Life Notes** schedule to fit your own.

## The Word: John 6:1-41

Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick. Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. The Jewish Passover Feast was near.

When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he spoke to Philip.

Jesus: *"Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"*

(He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.)

Philip: *"Eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"*

Andrew: *"Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"*

Jesus: *"Have the people sit down."*

There was plenty of grass in that place, and the men sat down, about five thousand of them. Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

When they had all had enough to eat, Jesus spoke to his disciples.

Jesus: *"Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted."*

So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten. After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to speak.

People: *"Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world."*

Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.

When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them. A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. When they had rowed three or three and a half miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were terrified. But he spoke to them.

Jesus: *"It is I; don't be afraid."*

Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.

The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone. Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him this question.

Crowd: *"Rabbi, when did you get here?"*

Jesus: *"I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."*

Crowd: *"What must we do to do the works God requires?"*

Jesus: *"The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."*

Crowd: *"What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"*

Jesus: *"I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."*

Crowd: *"Sir, from now on give us this bread."*

Jesus: *"I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."*

### **Life Notes:** this week in view

This week, the passage inspires us to think...to meditate...to be still and listen to God's voice...to discover ourselves in the story, both then and now. So this week, there will be just a few questions and the encouragement to spend quiet, listening time alone with God. For some, this will be a welcome and much needed retreat. For others, it will be difficult to be still and hear. Just "being" with God, in whatever state you are in, can be difficult. God loves you, understands you and desires that you feel fully known and fully his. Let this week be one where you take small steps in your journey of intimacy with God.

### Monday: face-to-face with Jesus

As you begin this time with God today, read John 6:1-40 at least twice, making note in your journal of any thoughts or questions that come to mind. The passage is familiar to many, but Pastor Mark revealed several layers of meaning for us that begin with our own hunger. Ask God to help you become aware of your spiritual and earthly hungers as you grow in your understanding of this journey in John.

Today, we want to focus on the contrast of hunger. The crowds were hungry and Jesus fed 5,000 men plus women and children with two fish and five small loaves of bread that the disciples borrowed from a boy.

We sometimes forget that God is at work in the world around us. He is on mission, and his mission involves using what we have - us - to do his work. Today, there is only one question to meditate on and consider.

*What's your "lunch" - what do **you** have to offer Jesus today?*

Throughout this day, this week, be aware of your lunch and offer it/yourself to Jesus each day as he continues to feed the world.

### Tuesday: face-to-face with hunger

Today, find a quiet spot with a journal, your Bible and a pen and let yourself rest just a moment. Begin to hear from God. Begin to turn your thoughts over to God. Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you.

Read John 6:1-13 two times, focusing on the human aspects of the story and then the divine - the way God-the-Son reached out to the crowds to meet their need.

*What is your hunger? What are you asking God for right now in your life?*

Journal and become aware of what you're asking.

## Tuesday: face-to-face with fear

Read John 6:16-24 at least two times. Find yourself in the story - where would you be? What would you be doing? Whose role/which part would you be playing in the boat? You might turn to parallel passages to broaden your understanding of the situation (Matthew 14:22-33, Mark 6:45-52).

The disciples had just witnessed an amazing miracle and were now hard at work taking the boat to the other side of the lake. Imagine their conversations, their exhaustion, their questions. Then Jesus approached by water - and on foot. It felt like too much. They were afraid.

*Besides the obvious, what do you think the disciples feared?*

*What is Jesus doing in your life right now that is causing you to feel afraid?*

Journal the fears that come to mind and close your time by discussing your fears, one by one, with God. If you have moments set aside, creatively identify your fears - draw them, create a story about them, examine each one with God right there beside and within you. Jesus told the disciples not to be afraid - that he was there. So take one step out of your fears toward Jesus.

## Wednesday: face-to-face with truth

Today, read John 6:25-33 at least two times. Concentrate on what the people wanted...and on what you want from Jesus.

The people followed Jesus because they wanted bread...they wanted healing...they wanted a Jesus they envisioned. We also have loud voices in our world - voices that pull us with their various promises of happiness, wellbeing, satisfaction, comfort, security. Perhaps our wants are a bit like a carnival with all the game and food booths promising satisfaction and competing for our attention.

*What or who do you trust?*

*What are the voices around you that compete for your dedication?*

Don't be afraid to circumvent the voices of the world today. Walk lightly past their meaningless persuasion and don't listen to them. Practice hearing, instead, what God is saying to you. Practice hearing his voice.

## Thursday: face-to-face with bread that satisfies

Begin your time by reading John 6:35 at least 3 times. Just that verse at first, and then the following verses.

*"I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." (John 6:32,33)*

*"I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (John 6:47-51)*

*“And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them saying, ‘This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.’” (Luke 22:19,20)*

Let God teach you about himself as bread and meditate around these questions or whatever God brings to mind.

*What is the spiritual bread Jesus is talking about? When have you tasted this spiritual bread? When are you aware of feeling satisfied?*

As you close your time today, ask God to help you focus on how he is feeding and caring for you.

### Friday: face-to-face with the bread of life

As you begin your time today, pray that the bread of life will be evident to you - that you'll be aware of God's gifts in your life and be able to receive what he is offering.

Read John 6:35-40 at least two times.

*What is Jesus preparing for you? What is he holding out to you for your nourishment? What part of his food still causes you to feel afraid...and why? What are you able to eat from his table right now?*

*What does God promise us in this passage?*

Let there be multiple moments of awareness today, when you concentrate on the bread that Jesus is offering you.

### Saturday

We encourage you to let Saturdays be a “mini Sabbath” moment. If Saturday is a work day for you, simply exchange this day in Life Notes for the day you have off. It's really important to learn to simply “be” with Jesus, with yourself, with those you love, without an “agenda.” Sabbath simply means “cease” and “rest.” So, today, spend moments truly resting with God the Father, Son and Spirit. “Cease” all of the detailed work and worries that creep into your life everyday.

Couples, if possible, spend some Sabbath moments together reading, taking a walk, drinking coffee outside, sharing a song you both like, inviting friends over and cooking for them, taking a drive or a bike ride, exercising, watching a movie. Whatever you might like to do to truly rest, do it together. You might laugh or cry with God about things that have happened in your life together this week. Just let the time unfold. Sense God's love for you; seek his peace and pursue it.

Families, spend a Sabbath day together. Let different members of the family choose what to do each week. Simply enjoy God's company together. Or maybe serve somewhere as a family or invite neighbors over, simply because you care.

Discover Jesus in all you do. He'll delight and amaze you.