

# Small Group Guide: Look Again

## Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

**Icebreaker Question:** Have you ever experienced a time when something that seemed blurry or confusing suddenly became clear? What was that moment like?

## Sermon Overview

This week, Pastor Mike explored Mark 7-8, focusing on the story of Jesus healing a blind man in two stages. Through this miracle, Jesus teaches His disciples (and us) about the influences that distort our view of Him and the process of truly seeing Him for who He is.

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## Key Scripture Passages

- Mark 8:11-21 (Warning about the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod)
  - Mark 8:22-26 (The healing of the blind man)
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## Discussion Questions

### Understanding the Text

1. **What does "leaven" represent in Jesus' warning to the disciples?** Pastor Mike defined it as "an unseen pervasive influence." How does a little bit of yeast affecting the whole batch of dough apply to spiritual influences in our lives?
2. **The Pharisees and Herod represented two different types of unbelief. How were they different?**
  - Pharisees: Emotionally committed to a different kind of king
  - Herod: Emotionally committed to a different kind of kingdom
3. **Why do you think Jesus healed the blind man in two stages instead of all at once?** What was He trying to teach His disciples through this unusual miracle?

### Personal Reflection

4. **What are some "lenses" or "filters" through which you currently view Jesus?**  
(Examples might include: disappointment, religious baggage, fear, control, political views, past hurts)
5. **Which type of unbelief are you more susceptible to:**
  - The Pharisees' approach: "I'll trust you IF you do things my way"
  - Herod's approach: "I'm interested in you, but don't interrupt my life"
6. **Have you ever experienced "blurry faith" - where you believe in Jesus but can't quite see Him clearly? What was (or is) that season like?**

## Application

7. **The sermon stated: "The goal of discipleship is to recognize Jesus clearly and then to follow Him fully."** What is one area where you need clearer vision of who Jesus is before you can follow Him more fully?
  8. **Jesus makes several bold claims about Himself:**
    - The resurrection and the life
    - The bread of life
    - The Prince of Peace
    - The light of the world
    - The way, the truth, and the life
    - The good shepherd
  9. **Which of these claims is hardest for you to fully believe right now? Why?**
  10. **What does it mean practically to "look again" at Jesus this week? What specific steps can you take to see Him more clearly?**
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## Key Takeaways

1. **Beware of influences that distort my view of Jesus.** Small, subtle influences can spread throughout our entire perspective if we're not careful.
  2. **The goal of discipleship is to recognize Jesus clearly and then to follow Him fully.** We cannot follow well what we cannot see clearly.
  3. **I can trust Jesus with what's still coming into focus.** Spiritual formation takes time, and Jesus is patient with our process.
  4. **Jesus is not done with you yet.** Even when our faith is blurry, Jesus continues to work to help us see Him more clearly.
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## Practical Applications

### This Week's Challenge

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

1. **Identify Your Influences:** Journal about the influences, experiences, or beliefs that may be distorting your view of Jesus. Bring these honestly to God in prayer.
  2. **Look Intently:** Like the blind man who "looked intently" when Jesus touched his eyes the second time, spend focused time this week reading one of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John) to see Jesus more clearly.
  3. **Challenge Your Conditions:** Notice when you catch yourself saying "I'll trust Jesus IF..." or "I'll follow Jesus WHEN..." Confess these conditions and ask God to help you trust Him unconditionally.
  4. **Share Your Blur:** Find a trusted friend or mentor and honestly share where your faith feels blurry right now. Ask them to pray with you for clearer vision.
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## Group Prayer Focus

- Pray for anyone in the group struggling to see Jesus clearly through disappointment, hurt, or confusion
  - Pray for protection against subtle influences that distort our view of Jesus
  - Pray for the faith to trust Jesus with what's still coming into focus
  - Pray for anyone who needs a "second touch" from Jesus to see Him more clearly
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## For Further Study

- Read through the Gospel of Mark chapters 7-8 in their entirety this week
  - Study other instances where Jesus performed miracles in stages or unusual ways
  - Explore what Scripture says about spiritual sight and blindness (John 9, 2 Corinthians 4:4-6, Ephesians 1:18)
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## Closing Reflection

**"Don't you understand yet?"** - Mark 8:21

Jesus asked this question not in frustration, but with hope. He's not done with us. Where is your faith still blurry? Where do you need to look again? Jesus is ready to give you clearer vision.

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*Remember: Faith is not instantaneous. Seeing Jesus for who He is takes time. Keep looking. Keep trusting. He's not done with you yet.*