



## Week Two

This week Pastor Jacob continued our series of messages about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. This series is reminding us of the call to discipleship even (especially) in the world and time we find ourselves in. In this message, we consider: Where does our ultimate allegiance lie? If you are studying with your Providence Small Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected to a Providence Small Group go to [www.prov.church/signup](http://www.prov.church/signup) and click on Small Groups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture. Follow the daily prayer prompt and then pray this prayer together:

*God, we are called to be followers of your son Jesus Christ. We are not always good at being followers. Remind us of who we are and whose we are in these days of confusing allegiance and motivation. Give us pure hearts for the cause of Christ. Amen.*

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## DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: MATTHEW 12.22-25

<sup>22</sup> Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. <sup>23</sup> All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

<sup>24</sup> But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons."

<sup>25</sup> Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand.

- The religious leaders of Jesus' day were trying to figure out who he was. They witnessed as he drove evil spirits out of a man. They wondered if this meant Jesus was a prince of demons. He argued that he couldn't be both the Son of David and a son of evil. You can't be working for the cause of evil and for God at the same time. Things will fall apart. Jesus had already done the good, miraculous thing and could have let the crowd give credit to Beelzebul. Instead, he reasons that it is impossible. Do you ever feel that your household, city, state or nation is so divided that it will not be able to stand? What about your heart? Are there times where the conflict inside your own heart leaves you feeling vulnerable to collapse? What are the indicators that you are facing that kind of conflict?

- *Pray for integrity of heart and life that causes others to be astonished by God's work through you.*

TUESDAY: HEBREWS 12.23b-24

*You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,<sup>24</sup> to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.*

- Jesus brought a new translation of God's relationship with us. The new covenant is centered around the sacrifice of Jesus himself as opposed to the human-provided sacrifice of the Old Testament. The former word is duty or obligation, the better word is Jesus. The old word that we cling to today is division and violence (as in the case of Cain and Abel), the new word is Jesus. What are some of the old words or ways of operating that you find yourself clinging to?
- *Pray the better word. Pray the name of Jesus throughout your day. He is enough.*

WEDNESDAY: JEREMIAH 25.6

*"Do not follow other gods to serve and worship them; do not arouse my anger with what your hands have made. Then I will not harm you."*

- God is speaking through the prophet Jeremiah here. Notice that he doesn't say that the work of our hands is inherently bad, rather it is our worship of our creation that causes a problem. The Bible is full of stories of humankind creating something to worship. For examples, see the tower of Babel (Genesis 11) or the golden calf (Exodus 32). Have you ever created something that became an object of worship or stole your allegiance?
- *Pray for a healthy perspective on the things you create.*

THURSDAY: MATTHEW 6.24

*"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."*

- Here Jesus was talking specifically about money. Money can become a master if we let it, and no one can serve two masters. What other masters do you have in your own life that vie for your allegiance? Have you successfully stopped serving a master other than God?
- *Pray for a heart to serve God above everything else.*

FRIDAY: 1 JOHN 2.15

*<sup>15</sup> Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them.*

- We invest in the things that we love. Give your whole heart to God and the things of this world will be put in their rightful place. Our allegiance to God bears fruit in a world that does not know God. Love God first. Do you struggle with keeping worldly things in perspective? Do you notice when others show greater allegiance to the things of the world than to God? How can you tell?
- *Pray that Jesus would have your whole heart.*

SATURDAY: 1 CORINTHIANS 1.10

*<sup>10</sup> I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.*

- Oftentimes we think that the way to break through division is to convince the other side that we are right. We can see how that mindset only increases division. The way to overcome these divisions is to wave the banner of Jesus--to keep our hearts and minds focused on him far above the things that divide.
  - *Pray for unity among God's people as you fix your heart and mind on Jesus.*
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## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- Pastor Jacob retold the story of a funeral hosted at Providence Church. The guest pastor repeated the name of Jesus over and over in the middle of a tragic loss of life. Has the name of Jesus spoken out loud or in your heart served as a balm in difficult times for you? How does that differ from other uses of the name of Jesus?
- Pastor Jacob shared that it is fine to be involved in politics and to strive for excellence, but for a disciple of Jesus, we also need to continually ask *Who is my master? Who is my God? Who owns my heart?* How would you answer those questions today?