



## WEEKLY STUDY

### Week Four

This is the fourth and final week in the season of Advent. Pastor Jacob shared about the events surrounding the birth of Jesus. In that scene, we see some of the best evidence of God's love for our broken world. 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 visit [prov.church/signup](http://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:

*Prayer of Love: God we see the evidence of your love for us. In our hearts, we hold the image of a baby born in a cattle stall and placed in a manger in Bethlehem. Your love doesn't look like we expect it to, and yet it is exactly what we need to be rescued and to receive everlasting life. Come Lord Jesus! Amen.*

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### DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: LUKE 2.1-7

*In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.<sup>2</sup> (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.)<sup>3</sup> And everyone went to their own town to register.*

*<sup>4</sup> So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. <sup>5</sup> He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, <sup>7</sup> and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.*

- When Jesus was born, the world didn't seem to have room for a little baby who would be the King of all kings. Mathematically, our world is much more crowded now than it was a couple of thousand years ago. Spiritually, it's probably more crowded too. Does there appear to be room for Jesus in our world today? He will make a way, so how what would it look like to prepare room for him in your heart?
- *Pray that Jesus would enter into someone's world through your heart.*

TUESDAY: 1 John 4.17-18

*This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus.<sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.*

- If we respond to fear and pain in the context of God's love then we can be made complete. If we respond to fear and pain with confidence in ourselves then we are missing out on the perfect love of God in Christ. Can others see God's love made complete in you because they see Jesus in you? In what areas of life are you tempted to place confidence in your own strength?
- *Pray that God's love would be made complete in you, and that others would see Jesus walking around through your life.*

WEDNESDAY: ISAIAH 54.10

*Though the mountains be shaken  
and the hills be removed,  
yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken  
nor my covenant of peace be removed,"  
says the LORD, who has compassion on you.*

- In seasons of life that feel unsteady or like an all-out earthquake beneath our feet, God has promised that his love will remain. God's covenant with us that was embodied in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus will not be removed. What is the difference between knowing this promise and living like it's true? What signs of God's covenantal love hold you close during shaky times?
- *Pray for daily reminders of God's love for you that can not be shaken.*

THURSDAY: ROMANS 5.8

*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

- Jesus is God's demonstration of God's love for us. Love seems to be something that we either know or don't know. There is nothing about our ability to be good that proves God's love. The fact that we are sinners and yet he comes to us is the proof of it. God's love looks like sacrifice and humility. What happens to our interactions with others and the outlook of our life when we have that kind of love in us?
- *Pray that God's love would come into your heart this Christmas Eve.*

FRIDAY: PSALM 36.5-7

*Your love, LORD, reaches to the heavens,  
your faithfulness to the skies.  
<sup>6</sup> Your righteousness is like the highest mountains,  
your justice like the great deep.  
You, LORD, preserve both people and animals.  
<sup>7</sup> How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!*

*People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.*

- The amazing thing about God's love for us is that we can begin to see how big it is, by looking to a tiny baby, born in a specific town, in a specific time other than our own. That's the mystery of the incarnation--it is at once made small enough to enter into our hearts, and large enough to reach to the highest heavens. How does your celebration of Christmas point to the scope of God's great love for us?
- *Pray, thanking God for His love for you that is beyond comprehension, priceless and unfailing.*

SATURDAY: 2 CHRONICLES 6.14

*"LORD, the God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven or on earth—you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way."*

- Solomon spoke these words at the completion of the temple in Jerusalem. It had been such a long journey to build the temple. If only Solomon could have known the road that laid ahead. It was to be difficult as well. But there would remain a remnant of God's people who continued wholeheartedly in the way of God. They were compelled by nothing less than the covenant of God's love for them. God wants our whole hearts in response to His love for us. How will you move towards giving your whole heart in the year to come?
- *Pray for wholeheartedness in your response to God's gift of love in Jesus.*

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- See reverse for Small Group Discussion -

## **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

- Pastor Jacob said that the baby in the manger is the proof of God's love. What proofs do you see of God's love in your town and in the manger of your heart?
- Pastor Jacob shared the story of he and his wife Rachel worshiping at the traditional site of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. When have you found space to worship the baby born in Bethlehem this Christmas?