



WEEKLY STUDY

Week One

Jacob began a new series that will address the presence of evil in the world. At the core of this series are these understandings: Evil is real, God can deliver us from evil, we don't have to fear evil, we have to take a stand against evil. 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 and click on Small Groups.

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

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: GENESIS 3.1

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"

- The serpent represents not just the introduction of evil, but evil itself. One of the things we are left to ponder is whether the serpent implanted sin in the hearts of Adam and Eve or simply exposed something that was already there. What was exposed was our ability to choose evil. Eve fought off the crafty questions from the snake, but the question had exposed a possibility that neither she nor Adam had realized before. The false account given by the serpent led to the kind of disaster that only God himself could address. When have you encountered a sense of evil?
- *Pray that evil in all its forms would be exposed for what it is.*

TUESDAY: PROVERBS 8.13

*To fear the LORD is to hate evil;
I hate pride and arrogance,
evil behavior and perverse speech.*

- What does it mean to fear the Lord? Most commonly this is understood as a holy reverence or respect. It can mean that we are to cower before God--which provides a helpful image. We bow before God, not because God wants us to remain scared our entire lives, but because God wants us to know that He is God and we are not. If you fear the Lord in this way, you will hate that which comes against Him. Can you join the writer of Proverbs in saying, "I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech."?
- *Pray for an increasingly healthy fear of God as you live your life for Jesus.*

WEDNESDAY: GENESIS 20-2-6

² *"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.*

³ *"You shall have no other gods before me.*

⁴ *"You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.*

- God gave Moses the 10 commandments. The leading teaching seemed to be God's concern with our awareness of who He is. Putting other things in the place of God is a denial of God's identity and heart towards us. Evil can have more power in our lives when we are looking to idols instead of God. What are some of the idols that you have had to (or need to) put down in order to recognize God as the ruler of your life?
- *Pray for a resolute heart that remembers God's salvation and tears down false idols.*

THURSDAY: EPHESIANS 6.10-12

¹⁰ *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*

- God's strength and protection is given to us so that we can stand against evil. These words from Paul are a reminder that one of the devil's schemes is to convince us that we are at war with one another. Our true enemy is evil itself. Have you ever found yourself in a position to stand up against evil? Describe the strength it took to do that. Have you experienced power that seemed to come from something beyond yourself?
- *Pray for more power and more strength from God so that you might stand in the presence of evil.*

FRIDAY: GENESIS 3.22

And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever."

- The result of the first act of disobedience was an awareness of good and evil. If Adam and Eve had also taken fruit from the tree of life, they could have lived forever, but would have lost their sense of need or fear of God. They were now living in a world where good and evil were both present and possible. So they were sent out of the garden. How does the persistence of evil in the world today impact your view of God?
- *Pray that the knowledge of good and evil would be a reminder of your daily need for God.*

SATURDAY: 2 PETER 3.9

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

- As we address the problem of evil, we are tempted to see God as slow to come to our rescue. 2 Peter teaches that God is waiting on us in hopes that none would perish, and all would turn back to God.
- *Thank God for His patience and His abiding love as we navigate a world where evil is present.*

- See reverse for Small Group Discussion -

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- Theodicy is the academic term for the problem of evil. Pastor Jacob shared this quote from Randy Alcorn, “more people point to the problem of evil and suffering as their reason for not believing in God than any other, it is not merely a problem, it is the problem.” How do you talk about theodicy with those who do not have a relationship with Jesus? How do you have those conversations with those who do follow Jesus?
- We heard a list of responses the world has to the problem of evil. How do these different responses resonate with you? How can you allow your heart and mind to be formed in truth?
 1. There is no evil
 2. There is no God
 3. God has limited goodness
 4. God has limited power
 5. God has limited knowledge

One more response is to say, “God will one day remove all evil and suffering.”