



WEEKLY STUDY

Week One

We began a new series this week that will guide us through the season of Lent. Lent is the season that leads us to Easter. We invite you to prepare your heart during this time by taking part in weekly prayer and journaling. [Download the Breaking Open Journal today](#). 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 this or another prayer:

O God, when faced with temptation in the wilderness, your Son Jesus was broken open to the power of your Spirit resting in him. In this season of Lent may I rely on your provision, look to your glory, and lean on your power and strength. Amen.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: MATTHEW 4.1-4

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.³ The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'⁴"

- "...he was hungry." It's easy to picture Jesus as a superhero who is above hunger. But (even though he was God) he was a man, a human with a body that needed nutrients for survival. He had a body that told him when it was in need. Maybe you can identify with his hunger. Maybe you can identify with the desire to just find what you need on the ground. When are you most susceptible to going along with the voice that guides you away from God's Way?
- *Pray for words to speak against the temptation to risk God's purpose for your life in order to satisfy your immediate desire.*

TUESDAY: MATTHEW 4.5-7

Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple.⁶ "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

*"He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."⁷*

⁷ Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

- Sometimes we ask God for a sign to light our path forward. Jesus had received a sign in the waters of the Jordan River when he was baptized 40 days earlier (the voice of God, the Spirit of God like a dove). The tempter suggests that a bigger sign would be more fruitful. Jesus remains satisfied with the signs of his baptism. What are the signs that God has used to lead you to his purposes for your life? Have you ever desired a bigger sign that might point to your greatness?
- *Ask God to reveal signs of his purpose for your life (either from the past, present or future).*

WEDNESDAY: MATTHEW 4.8-11

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.⁹ "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

- This is a stark insight into the schemes of the tempter. You can gain the world but lose your soul (Mark 8.36). If you have power over the entire world, but bow down to darkness, you really have no power at all. It's a trick. Have you had the opportunity to "go bigger" but knew that it would cost you the good, true, and beautiful things in your life?
- *Pray over a list of the things in your life that are priceless.*

THURSDAY: GALATIANS 2.20

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

- "Breaking open" means to give up in the best sense of that phrase. Jesus gave up to the will of his Father, and was given everything he needed in order to point the world to the heart of God. We are invited to be broken open to Jesus in that same way. Jesus Christ came to live in us. When was the last time you were at a breaking point? How did it feel? What would it look like for you to break open instead of break down?
- *Pray for the cracks in your heart to be filled with the light of Christ.*

FRIDAY: JAMES 4.7-8a

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you.

- Submission to God may start in a big moment of surrender for some people, but it continues every day for the Jesus follower. The tempter from Matthew 4 will flee, but we must stay near to God in order to keep the devil at bay. Coming near to God and resisting the devil can be one fluid movement. When has resisting evil led you to God?
- *Thank God for his willingness to move toward you.*

SATURDAY: MARK 8.34-35

Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.³⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.

- The temptations of Jesus in the wilderness were all about the potential of saving his own life and bringing glory to himself. The glory that Jesus received was fully seen through his act of losing his life for us. What does it look like to lose one's life for Jesus and for the gospel?
 - *Pray for a willingness to daily carry your cross and submit to Jesus.*
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- See reverse for Small Group Discussion -

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- Pastor Jacob said that on the journey to Easter, we should not skip the cross. What does that mean to you?
- A line from a song we sometimes sing in worship says,

*"So teach my song to rise to You
When temptation comes my way
And when I cannot stand, I'll fall on You
Jesus, You're my hope and stay"*
(Lord I Need You by Matt Maher)

What is the song you sing when temptation comes your way? How do you practice submission to Jesus Christ in your daily life?