



WEEKLY STUDY

Week One

Our summer series, *Pathways*, started with an introduction to the Way of Christ. In a conversation with His disciples, Jesus explained that the way to the heart of God is more important than understanding where heaven is. Each week in this series we will look at one of the Pathways to a closer relationship with God that Jesus demonstrated for us. This week we saw that Jesus demonstrated the importance of solitude in the life of a believer. He often stole away from the crowd in order to hear from God the Father.

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 your own prayer.

Lord, show us your way.

You are the Way.

Meet us in times of solitude in the days to come, we pray.

Amen

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: JOHN 14.3-8,9b

I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴You know the way to the place where I am going."

⁵*Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"*

⁶*Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."*

⁸*Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.*

- These words were spoken by Jesus to his disciples soon before he was crucified on the cross. He seems to be anticipating their grief and despair. Jesus gives them hope that they don't have to worry about how to get to heaven, they just need to follow Him.

- Pray with thanksgiving that you can know God the Father when you come to know Jesus.

TUESDAY: MATTHEW 7.13-14

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

- Jesus describes the Way as a narrow gate. In another place He refers to himself as the gate. Jesus is the gate which leads to life. As we follow his pathways we will find an abundant life and faith. This narrow gate is not to be confused with God’s mercy, which is wide. The wideness of God’s mercy leads us to the pathways of life.
- *Pray for the refinement of your heart and life that comes from following the path of Jesus.*

WEDNESDAY: MARK 1.35

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Mark 1.35

- Jesus had this healthy habit (or discipline) of getting up early or staying up late in order to spend time in solitude with His heavenly Father. Have you had early morning or late night encounters with God? When and where do you find solitude?
- Pray for this same pattern of solitude to be present in your life and for it to bring you closer to God.

THURSDAY: MATTHEW 6.6

But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

- Jesus seems to explain some of His own behavior here. He was one to pray alone on several occasions. How do you respond to this instruction to pray in private? Why would He want us to spend time talking to God on our own?
- *Pray in a space where no one can see you. Make your prayer just about you and God.*

FRIDAY: 1 KINGS 19.11-13

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

- The prophet Elijah was listening for the voice of God. It didn't come in the wind, the earthquake or the fire. It came in a gentle whisper. Sometimes God's voice can surprise us. It can come after the storm. Have you ever felt like you were hearing God's voice? If so, how did you respond?
- *Pray by listening for God's voice. Be still and wait on God to speak.*

SATURDAY: MATTHEW 26.36-40

...he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

³⁹ Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

⁴⁰ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping.

- This is the scene in the garden of Gethsemane on the night before the crucifixion of Jesus. His betrayal was imminent. He actually wanted company. What He needed was solitude to cry out to God in. In the solitude He aligned His will with the Father's.
- *Thank God for the moments of solitude that align our hearts with His.*

- See reverse for Small Group Discussion -

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

In the message, Pastor Mark shared this quote from author Richard Foster, "There was a time, not so very long ago, when solitude and silence were available to people by the normal conditions of everyday life. Not any longer! In our day we have to choose solitude and silence and plan our lives accordingly."

How does this quote resonate with you? Do you find it to be true? How will you choose solitude and silence?