



WEEKLY STUDY

Week Seven

Our summer series called Pathways is introducing eight practices that help us get closer to the heart of God. So far, we've explored the practices of solitude, fasting, worship, studying God's Word, spiritual friendship, and service. This week we learned about the pathway of simplicity.

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.

*God, as I approach you in prayer today, please strip away the pretenses and self-grandeur that sometimes impact my conversations with you. It is just me and you. Take over this prayer God. And take over my life. Speak Lord, I am listening.
Amen.*

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: PSALM 116.3-6

*The snares of death encompassed me;
the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me;
I suffered distress and anguish.*

⁴ *Then I called on the name of the LORD:
"O Lord, I pray, save my life!"*

⁵ *Gracious is the Lord, and righteous;
our God is merciful.*

⁶ *The Lord protects the simple;
when I was brought low, he saved me.*

- The Lord protects the simple. When we get to the end of ourselves, we are in a very good place. God will protect us and we are more likely to receive it. God is merciful and the pathway of simplicity helps us to recognize how amazing this gift is.

- *Pray the prayer of the psalmist, “O Lord, I pray, save my life!”*

TUESDAY: MATTHEW 6.19-21

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal;²⁰ but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal.²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- Simplicity does not mean that you rid yourself of all possessions. Instead, it requires that you put them in their place. Do not let your possessions become your treasure. Jesus was very concerned we would direct our hearts away from God. He taught against this idea in his own day. How are you able to pay attention to the focus of your heart? How do you know if it is something other than God?
- *Pray with gratitude for the provisions which God has given you, then picture yourself setting them on the shelf and focusing solely on God in prayer.*

WEDNESDAY: 1 TIMOTHY 6.6-7

Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment;⁷ for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it;

- When Paul wrote these words, the average person had far less possessions and daily business interactions than today. Yet it is easy to comprehend the need for contentment even then. How much greater is the need of this teaching today? Simplicity is founded on having a Kingdom view. What really matters is beyond the things of this world. How does that teaching sit with you today?
- *Pray for a heart of contentment even in the midst of the struggles of daily life.*

THURSDAY: MATTHEW 6.33-34

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

- *Pray through these verses from Psalm 119. Allow them to form or reform your response to God’s commands.*

FRIDAY: LUKE 10.21

²¹ At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

- The resurrected Jesus is sharing with some disciples on the road to Emmaus. The disciple had been trying to make meaning of the events leading up to Easter. Jesus gives them the whole story, revealing how it all pointed to Him. It could be that every Bible study since has been an attempt to understand this one that Jesus led while walking down the road.

- *Pray with imagination that as you read the Bible today you would see more and more of Jesus.*

SATURDAY: PSALM 131

²¹ At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

- In the New Testament letter to the Ephesians, Paul writes about taking *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*. Centuries earlier the Psalmist claimed the same power for God's word. What can mere mortals do to us when we have the word of God? How can you practice this kind of faith today?
- *Pray through challenges and attacks you might be facing, but do so as you praise God's word.*

- Small Group Discussion Questions will Resume in August -