



## WEEKLY STUDY

### Week Three

Pastor Jacob returned for our Wisdom from Above series. He picked up this theme from the book of James that states that we can find joy in the middle of our trials if we persevere and don't give up.

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional question at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected to a Providence Small Group visit [prov.church/smallgroups](http://prov.church/smallgroups).

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,  
*I'm going to pray this prayer until it is true:*  
*Let me consider it joy when I face trials.*  
*Let perseverance bring forth a deeper faith in you.*  
*Give me strength to stand that I might receive the crown of life from your hand.*  
Amen

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## DAILY STUDY

### MONDAY: JAMES 1.12

*Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.*

- Jacob said, "Blessed is the one who keeps going. Who does not give up. Who perseveres under trial, who perseveres when the world is throwing everything at 'em." We all know what it feels like when the world seems to be throwing the worst things our way. Have you ever felt blessing in the middle of a trial? What helped you to see the blessing?
- *Thank God for allowing you to see blessings on the worst of days.*

## TUESDAY: JAMES 1.13-15

*When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;<sup>14</sup> but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.*

*<sup>15</sup> Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

- When we give way to temptation, most often it can be traced to a time of stress. When we go through hard things, we find excuses (or justification) to give into our own desires. Remember, not all desire leads to sin, but evil desire leads us away from God and eventually, to death. We were meant for life, on this earth and beyond.
- *Pray for more of God’s wisdom that roots out sin in your heart.*

## WEDNESDAY: JAMES 1.17-18

*Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.<sup>18</sup> He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.*

- James is inviting us to yet another shift in perspective. When we have moments in our lives that seem perfect, we might be tempted to give credit to ourselves or our own actions. But God gives us good and perfect gifts and gives us life so that the good gifts might grow.
- *Repeat this prayer today, “God and Father of heavenly lights, every good and perfect gift is from you.”*

## THURSDAY: ROMANS 12.11-12

*Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.<sup>12</sup> Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.*

- We don’t use the word “zeal” a lot. But if you have a sense of its meaning, you probably also have a person or two in mind who exhibit zeal. Joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer. There is something undeniable about a person who seems to have joy going before them in all times. We might ask, “how do they do it?”
- Pray for a sense of joy in your heart today, commit to remain patient and ask God for more joy.

## FRIDAY: JOHN 15.11-13

*If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup> I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. <sup>12</sup> My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.*

- Jesus wants his joy to be in us so that our joy may be complete. What does complete joy look like? Jesus attaches it to love. And love that continues to grow beyond the boundaries of our self-interest and perspective might lead to a joyful laying down of our lives.
- Pray for a deeper love for God, others, and yourself.

## SATURDAY: PSALM 4.6-7

*Many, LORD, are asking, "Who will bring us prosperity?"*

*Let the light of your face shine on us.*

*<sup>7</sup> Fill my heart with joy*

*when their grain and new wine abound.*

- David is wrestling with other people's desire for prosperity. When he sees others being blessed with grain and new wine, his hope is that his heart will be filled with joy. True joy can come from seeing others find their happiness. Where do you go to enjoy such a sight?
- *Pray for the deep longings of your neighbors, earnestly seek their blessing, and open your heart to joy from God.*

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- See reverse for Small Group Discussion -

## **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

Pastor Jacob shared about a conversation he had with the Lay Leader of Providence Church Liz Reese. She said, “you won’t understand my praise until you understand my pain. You won’t understand why I’m praising God like this, my joy. Until you understand what God has brought me through!”

Sometimes, even while we fully recognize the pain we are in, we also feel an undeniable urge to worship God. It doesn’t make sense in this world, but it brings peace to those who mourn and struggle and can actually lead to surprising joy. Have you ever experienced the urge to praise in times of pain?