



WEEKLY STUDY

WEEK 1

Happy New Year! At Providence Church we started the new year together in worship. God knows what 2023 will hold for us, but we know that God will be with us, and that He will move in amazing ways. Our sermon series to start the year is centered around the idea of an awakening that can take place within individuals, the church, the community, country, and world. One of the saddest thoughts for a follower of Jesus would be to wake up one day in your later years and realize that you've been sleepwalking through life. God wants us to live fully awake, so join us this year as we are restored to an ever-increasing life in Christ.

Peace of Christ,
Dr. Mark Youngman
Pastor of Discipleship

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship 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 visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture and follow the daily prayer prompt. Pray this or another prayer as you move into your day.

God,
Wake me up from any slumber I have been living in.
Make me fully alert to your ways.
May Christ shine on me today.
Amen.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: EPHESIANS 5.1-2

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children² and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

- As followers of Jesus, we look to his way—the way he lived, the way he talked to God, the way he interacted with others. But ultimately, we look to the way he loved. To say that we walk in the way of love is about more than being kind to others. Jesus loved us in a way that led to him giving

himself up as an offering for us. Not exactly a Hallmark kind of love. **What does it look like for you to lay down your life for those you love?**

- *Jesus, your way of love is not the easy way, but it is the good and right way for me to live. Help me to walk in the way of love. Amen.*

TUESDAY: EPHESIANS 5.3-7

³But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. ⁴Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. ⁵For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. ⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷Therefore do not be partners with them.

- This is a hard lesson from Paul. He has seen how easy it is to fall into the traps of things that are out of place. It's easy to be negative and requires more discipline to be grateful. Following Jesus impacts the way that we live. Our hearts and minds can be taken off course by all kinds of foolish things that keep us from the way of Jesus—the way of love. We can't partner with things that distract us from Jesus. **How do these words from Paul strike you today? Do his words convict you of any behavior that has crept into your life? What or whom are the partners that inform the steps you take?**
- *God, may these words of scripture serve as a mirror for me today. Allow me to see the impurities in my life. Through the grace of Jesus Christ, may my inheritance be in your kingdom. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: EPHESIANS 5.8-14

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹²It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. ¹⁴This is why it is said:

*“Wake up, sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”*

- Everything that is illuminated becomes a light. What a promise for people who were once in darkness but are now light in the Lord. The fruit or evidence of this light are goodness, righteousness, and truth. Paul calls us out of a kind of spiritual slumber and into a bright life with Christ. **Are you living as children of the light? What kinds of activities would you identify as fruitless deeds of darkness?**
- *God, I want to be a child of the light. Illuminate me in all I do so that I can shine for you! Amen.*

THURSDAY: ROMANS 8.28-29

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

- God desires that followers of Jesus would become more and more like him—conformed to his image. He desires that Jesus would be the prototype of sorts for a whole movement of people who

have aligned their purpose with his. **What is on your mind when you wake up in the morning? What gives you the most energy? Is it serving others? Is it providing for your family? Is it creating space for others to shine?**

- *God, reveal my purpose today. Give me passion for the work you have designed me for. Give me a burning passion to be like Jesus. Amen.*

FRIDAY: COLOSSIANS 3.15

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

- We were called to a life of peace because the peace of Christ is ruling in our hearts. Together, as the church, we are called to demonstrate what this peace looks like in community. It should be striking—even breathtaking for the world to see how we live together. **Name a time when your connection with the church brought you peace. How does that peace connect to the level of gratitude you feel?**
- *Jesus, may your peace rule in my heart today. When others see me, may they also see you. Amen.*

SATURDAY: MATTHEW 11.28-30

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

- Fatigue leads to more fatigue. The rest that Jesus offers to us is necessary for us to fully wake up to let Christ shine on and through us. Somehow we find rest and peace when we are carrying the yoke that Jesus has for us. **We want our burdens to be light so that we can shine for him! Have you been receptive to rest recently? What factors seem to keep you feeling tired?**
- *God, I know what it feels like to be exhausted and worn out. But I must be carrying burdens that Jesus doesn't require that I carry. Help me to take on his yoke instead of my own. Amen.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

We shared together in a traditional Wesleyan Covenant Prayer that helps us put things in the right order. As you read through this prayer, identify the places in it that feel like sticking points.

I am no longer my own, but thine.

Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.

Put me to doing, put me to suffering.

Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee, exalted for thee or brought low for thee.

Let me be full, let me be empty.

Let me have all things, let me have nothing.

I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.

And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, thou art mine, and I am thine.

So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.

Amen.

- Which lines stand out as unusual or even counter to the way of the world? What kind of person willingly asks to be full or empty? To have nothing?
- Can you see why this prayer is important for a follower of Jesus at the start of a new year?
- Pray the Wesleyan Covenant prayer together.