



## WEEKLY STUDY

### WEEK 3

In this third week of our series on Practicing the Way, Pastor Jacob adapted a teaching on the reasons that Jesus stopped. As we grow in Christ-likeness, it turns out that these seven reasons to stop are true for us as well. In these practices of Jesus, may you find peace and grace, and even empowerment and motivation to rest.

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](http://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.

*O God,*

*Give me pause to pause.*

*On my own I am likely to keep on plowing through life.*

*Give me pause to pause.*

*On my own I pursue false refreshment for my soul.*

*Give me pause to pause with You.*

*On my own I will consult no one but my own desire.*

*Give me pause to pause for You.*

*Amen.*

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## DAILY STUDY

### MONDAY: MATTHEW 14.6-13

*On Herod's birthday the daughter of Herodias danced for the guests and pleased Herod so much<sup>7</sup> that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked.<sup>8</sup> Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist."<sup>9</sup> The king was distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests,*

he ordered that her request be granted<sup>10</sup> and had John beheaded in the prison.<sup>11</sup> His head was brought in on a platter and given to the girl, who carried it to her mother.<sup>12</sup> John's disciples came and took his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus.

<sup>13</sup> When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place.

- We all handle grief differently. Many people, when faced with the loss of someone they loved, find it helpful to remain busy with the funeral arrangements. As an almost instinctual survival method, they tend to the needs of others, and it is completely normal and understandable. However each of us, in a time of grief, will soon need to stop. Jesus revealed that stopping and finding solitude is a necessary part of grieving. **When have you experienced grief and loss? How do you typically respond? Are you aware? How does the practice of stopping factor into your process of grieving?**
- *Jesus, you are acquainted with my grief on a human level. In seasons of loss, may I learn to rest in you. Amen.*

## TUESDAY: MARK 1.32-35

That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed.<sup>33</sup> The whole town gathered at the door,<sup>34</sup> and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

<sup>35</sup> 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.

- A life of prayer can be lived on the go. Speaking to God throughout the day is a way to stay connected to God's mercy and direction for your life. But as with all relationships, your relationship with God requires times of deep listening and conversation. In order for that to happen on a regular basis, you need to create time and space. Like Jesus, you may need to get up early from time to time, find solitude and pray. If you feel like you have been dealing with demons all day long, it's time to stop and pray. **Do you have a regular pattern for stopping to pray? If not, what could that look like?**
- *God, I confess that I often respond to the spiritual and physical challenges of my life by charging full steam ahead, as if I can resolve them on my own. Forgive me and draw me into prayerful rest with you. Amen.*

## WEDNESDAY: MARK 4.35-36

That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side."<sup>36</sup> Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat.

- Jesus' good work in the crowd could have continued and consumed every moment of the rest of his life. The crowd was not going to tell him to stop performing miracles and teaching them the words of life. Why would they? But Jesus was aware of his own need to stop and get away from the crowd and find rest. Even the most extroverted among us needs to step away from the crowd from time to time. **How do you know when it is time for you to remove yourself from the crowd for a time? What indicators do you look for?**
- *God, I look to Jesus as the model for my life. Help me to seek and find space from the crowds of life so that I may rest and be my best for you. Amen.*

## THURSDAY: MARK 6.42-46

They all ate and were satisfied,<sup>43</sup> and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish.<sup>44</sup> The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

<sup>45</sup> Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd.<sup>46</sup> After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

- This is one of those scenes when we can clearly see that Jesus was both fully divine and fully human. In one moment, he performed a miraculous feeding of five thousand people. In the next moment (immediately) Jesus sent away even his closest friends and sought space for prayer and solitude. **We may or may not be able to perform miracles when we follow Jesus, but we will not be able to avoid our need to recharge and be refilled. What are some of the healthy ways you recharge and experience productive rest?**
- *God, thank you for each display of your miraculous power. Thank you for even using me in big or small ways. Give me rest that produces in me a deeper connection with you, and more strength for the work you have set before me. Amen.*

## FRIDAY: LUKE 6.12-15

One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.<sup>13</sup> When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles:<sup>14</sup> Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew,<sup>15</sup> Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot,<sup>16</sup> Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

- Jesus made this world changing call to the twelve he chose as his disciples. The make up of these men allowed the story to unfold the way it needed to. But notice that before he took this monumental step, he consulted with God. He spent the whole night on the mountainside in prayer. **Why would the Son of God need to consult with God? What important decisions or actions are you facing right now? Have you consulted with God?**
- *God, you know the big and little decisions that stand before me. Give me your wise counsel and guide me through prayer. Amen.*

## SATURDAY: JOHN 4.4-6

Now he had to go through Samaria.<sup>5</sup> So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph.<sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

- This is Jesus identifying with our weakness and limitations. In his humanity, Jesus was tired from a long journey. He stopped at Jacob's well. After this respite, Jesus was right where he needed to be in order to have another life changing encounter, this time with the Samaritan woman. **Why is it so important that Jesus knows the exhaustion of a long journey? What is the connection between knowing your limitations and responding to God's call to share the Good News?**
- *Jesus, you know my exhaustion, it is no surprise to you. As you give me rest, clear my eyes to see the next person you put in my path. Amen.*

## **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

Pastor Jacob shared these 7 reasons Jesus stopped from clinical psychologist Dr. Elizabeth Alliota.

1. Jesus stopped to grieve.
2. Jesus stopped to pray.
3. Jesus stopped to leave the crowd.
4. Jesus stopped to recharge.
5. Jesus stopped to set an example.
6. Jesus stopped to consult with God.
7. Jesus stopped because he had physical limitations.

- How does each of these reasons for stopping connect with your life today?
- Which of the reasons are you most resistant to?
- What challenges (internal or external) keep you from stopping?
- Which of the 7 reasons would you like to focus on this week as you look for opportunities to stop like Jesus?