



## WEEKLY STUDY

### WEEK 4

Pastor Gary wrapped up our 4-part conversation on mental health. He shared the story of a demon possessed man recorded in Luke 8:26-39 and helped us to confront the inner demons that we struggle with in life. As Gary said, God wants to shine his healing light on us. May we name the inner demons and find healing.

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.

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### DAILY STUDY

#### MONDAY: LUKE 8.35-36 (MSG)

*They came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had been sent, sitting there at Jesus' feet, wearing decent clothes and making sense. It was a holy moment, and for a short time they were more reverent than curious. Then those who had seen it happen told how the demoniac had been saved.*

- These verses are at the conclusion of events that began in verse 26. A man had been possessed by demons, was living in a cemetery, and had been bound up in chains. After his encounter with Jesus, he was seen in a whole new light. When we see someone go through a miraculous transformation, we typically pause in the surprise before we try to explain it. That happened in Luke 8 as well. *For a short time they were more reverent than curious.* **Why do you think this gap between reverence and witness exists? When God has done something amazing in your life, how likely are you to notice and give Him your worship?**
- *God, thank you for the healing power of Jesus. He can drive out demons that are too many to count. Give me the faith to allow my inner demons to come to light before him. Amen.*

## TUESDAY: EPHESIANS 6.10-12

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.<sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.<sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

- The spiritual armor of God is required to take a stand against external and internal demons. It is easier to blame our struggles on the person in front of us, on TV, or in Congress, than it is to see the deeper struggle taking place. **Can you think of a situation in which you were able to look beyond the struggle with flesh and blood and consider the spiritual nature of what you are facing? What role does empathy play when evaluating a conflict with another person?**
- *God, give me spiritual eyes to see the true struggle around me. May I lean on the armor you offer through Jesus Christ. Amen.*

## WEDNESDAY: REVELATION 3.8

See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

- Pastor Gary said that healing is connected to naming. We put the name of Jesus on our lips. We also strive to identify the inner demons in order to put them in their place below the feet of Jesus. By claiming his name and keeping his word, we can walk through the doors to the life that God has prepared for us. **Name some of the doors of opportunity and choice you are facing right now. How can you identify a door kept open by Jesus?**
- *God, reveal the path that you have laid for me. Give me the strength I need to keep your word and proclaim your name. Amen.*

## THURSDAY: 2 CORINTHIANS 10.12-13

We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.<sup>13</sup> We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the sphere of service God himself has assigned to us, a sphere that also includes you.

- Gary quoted Chris Hodges who said that comparison can lead to depression. As Paul wrote, when we measure ourselves by others and compare ourselves to them, we are not wise. If we find ourselves around boastful people, we should be especially careful not to measure ourselves against them. **What are the places and times you struggle most with comparing yourself to others? Social Media? The gym? The workplace? Think about how much time you spend worrying about how you stack up.**
- *God, you compare me only to Christ and you give me grace for my weaknesses that I might allow Jesus to come alive in me. Thank you. Amen.*

## FRIDAY: ROMANS 12.1-2

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. <sup>2</sup>Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

- The mind is part of that which God is restoring through Jesus Christ. Our God is not a God of confusion, so as we test and approve God's will, we can know that his will is away from confusion and towards a renewed mind. There are times when we most feel the need for a renewed mind. It may be after a long day of work, long distance travel, or an emotional conversation. When is your mind most fatigued and susceptible to being conformed to the pattern of this world? What activities are helpful for the renewal of your mind? What keeps you grounded?
- *Jesus, I thank you for the mercy you have extended to us that allows us to offer ourselves to God as a living sacrifice. Renew my mind day by day, that I may see your perfect will. Amen.*

## SATURDAY: GALATIANS 2.20

*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

- If we allow Jesus to live in us, the voices of darkness will be put in their place. The surrender language used in Galatians indicates that for Jesus to fully live in us, we have to give ourselves over to him. We have to identify with his crucifixion. The reward for this surrender is a new life of faith. **What is something for which you would say, "I'd give my life for that?"**
- *Jesus, I want you to live in me that I might live by faith in you. Amen.*

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

These comparison traps are identified in Chris Hodges' book *Out of the Cave*.

### **We compare our weaknesses to others strengths.**

We assume the worst about ourselves

### **We focus on our deficits rather than our value.**

Partial view of someone else and comprehensive view of ourselves

### **We fall into the thought trap of self-labeling.**

What we do – or what we have done – is who we are

I am a quitter – I do not follow through - I cannot do anything right

### **We assume other people have better lives than ours.**

Envy eats us up – We cannot celebrate others success

- Are any of these traps present in your life?
- If so, have you named that to others?
- How can you commit to avoiding these traps?
- How can your Small Group of Discipleship Group help you with that?