



## WEEKLY STUDY

### WEEK 1

We began a challenging new series this week that is focused on the principle that everything we have in our lives actually belongs to God. It's God's economy, and as followers of Jesus, we are called to live with a different relationship to possessions. When we live according to God's economy, we actually find a new freedom to live the life we were intended to live. May you experience freedom and joy as you enjoy the gifts of God the Father this week.

Peace of Christ,  
Pastor Mark

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: PSALM 24.1-4

*The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it,  
the world, and all who live in it;*

<sup>2</sup>*for he founded it on the seas  
and established it on the waters.*

<sup>3</sup>*Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?  
Who may stand in his holy place?*

<sup>4</sup>*The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
who does not trust in an idol  
or swear by a false god.*

- Everything in the whole world belongs to God. Picture God's people reciting this Psalm as they climbed up to the temple. It was most likely recited during an annual festival in which they asked as they walked, "Who can stand in the holy place of God?" They hoped to be made clean and given a pure heart as they approached. The one who can ascend the mountain of the Lord is the one who remembers that everything in the whole world belongs to God. In order for us to be able to

fully enjoy the things of this world and our life with God, we have to be cleansed of the little things that we allow to rule us. **What are some objects or ideas that seem to consume you? What do you think about first thing in the morning?**

- *Jesus, I give you my life. Forgive me for thinking of myself as the owner of the gifts you have given me. I want to be a steward in the Kingdom of God. Amen.*

## **TUESDAY: 1 PETER 4.10-11**

*Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.<sup>10</sup> If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.*

- These words are part of an urgent plea and warning that Peter was making to all of the churches. It is called a general epistle for that reason. The urgency makes it sound more specific which allows us to imagine that it was written for us as well—because it was. In the surrounding passage Peter is encouraging followers of Jesus to remember that they live in a different way, and that that different way can be hard. The way to stay focused on Jesus is to remember that we are stewards of the gifts God gives us. Everything we do and say ought to bring praise to the God who gives us the words and the strength with which we do them. **When have your own words or strength failed you?**
- *God, today may I find that your words and strength are everything I need to bring you glory. Amen.*

## **WEDNESDAY: 2 CORINTHIANS 9.6-9**

*Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.<sup>7</sup> Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.<sup>8</sup> And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.<sup>9</sup> As it is written:*

*“They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor;  
their righteousness endures forever.”*

- Paul is asking for believers to collect financial support for the furthering of the gospel to people in new areas. Yes, he's asking for an offering, while also pointing to God's provision. The language of sowing seeds is helpful in understanding how a generous offering can produce a great yield. Over the course of time, more seeds planted ought to result in a greater harvest. We give not for what we receive in return, but we have the assurance that our God will take care of us. **Have you ever experienced God giving you exactly what you need after you showed generosity? It's like our hearts are in a better posture to see and receive the goodness of God after we have given something away.**
- *God, as I take stock of the blessings in my life today, I recognize that it is all yours, yet you give it to me anyway. May I honor you with all of it. Amen.*

## THURSDAY: 2 TIMOTHY 4.6-8

*For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near.<sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.<sup>8</sup> Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

- Paul clearly anticipated that his death was imminent. In reflecting on his life and ministry, Paul likened it to an offering being poured out and a ship about to depart. An earthly judge had imprisoned him but God, the righteous Judge has a crown prepared for him. The image of a life being poured out means there is nothing held back. Jesus gave his life for us in this way. Completely. Poured. Out. Those who long for Jesus' appearing will receive the crown of righteousness as well. **Who are examples of this kind of (poured-out) life? How have they impacted you?**
- *God, I long to be able to say these words with Paul one day. Not that my life on earth has ended, but that it has been given away for the sake of the gospel. Amen.*

## FRIDAY: HEBREWS 2.10 (NLT)

*God, for whom and through whom everything was made, chose to bring many children into glory. And it was only right that he should make Jesus, through his suffering, a perfect leader, fit to bring them into their salvation.*

- The same God who created the whole universe, made us and made a way for us to receive salvation. Picture a creator of any kind. You know that the creator could choose to walk away from his creation. But God chose instead to bring many children into glory. In the gift of Jesus, and in his suffering, we have the perfect One through who we can have life. **Think about the kindness of our Creator God. How can you reflect praise and gratitude today?**
- *Jesus, thank you for your willingness to live and suffer death for me. Lead me into the light of your salvation. Amen.*

## SATURDAY: HEBREWS 2.14-18

*Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—<sup>15</sup> and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.<sup>16</sup> For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants.<sup>17</sup> For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.<sup>18</sup> Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted*

- If our life was truly our own, we would expend all of our energy and resources to preserve it. If so, we would be living out of a fear of death, and therefore not really living at all. But our lives are not our own, they belong to God and we are made free in Christ. We are made like him and so we can participate in the defeat of death and evil. **What does it mean for you that Jesus is a faithful high priest who atones for your sins?**
- *Jesus, you are a great high priest who offers me freedom from the fear of death. Help me to release my grip on my own life and give it back to you. Amen.*

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Pastor Jacob listed these possessions that we often need to give back to God's care.

Your finances. They belong to God.

Your family. They belong to God.

Your automobile belongs to God.

Your time belongs to God.

Your energy belongs to God.

Your heart belongs to God.

Giving these things to God's care means you are protected. You are provided for. You are safe in Him. And it gives you the freedom to pour out.

- In what ways do your possessions seem to own you?
- What possessions or fears about possessions are most difficult to give to God?
- Has a lack of ownership status ever brought you relief? Have you ever said, "I'm glad that's not mine to worry about"?
- What are you committing to return to God's care?