



## WEEKLY STUDY

### A Life that Points to Jesus

This week we studied Luke 12:1-12. It's a passage in a section of Luke where Jesus seemed to be ramping up his teachings. Time was getting shorter and the urgency of getting all of the important teachings across to his disciples was palpable. It's like when you leave for a long trip. You spend days thinking about and packing the key essentials, and then at the last minute, you think of a dozen things you've left out.

Jesus had an urgent message for his disciples based on what they had just seen in the behavior of the Pharisees (Luke 11). There is a lot about the way religion is practiced that actually harms those who are seeking to get close to God. Jesus wanted to ensure that his disciples knew God and what it meant to live in a way that points back to Jesus. He wants for us, **an honest, deeply rooted worship in response to God's love and care for us, that leads us to confess with our lives that Jesus is Lord.** May your study and time of prayer increase your capacity to do just that.

Peace of Christ,  
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below.. If you would like to get connected visit [prov.church/smallgroups](http://prov.church/smallgroups).

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### DAILY STUDY

#### MONDAY: LUKE 12:1-12 (NIV)

*Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying: "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.<sup>2</sup> There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known.<sup>3</sup> What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.*

*<sup>4</sup>"I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more.<sup>5</sup> But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.<sup>6</sup> Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by*

God.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

<sup>8</sup> "I tell you, whoever publicly acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God.<sup>9</sup> But whoever disowns me before others will be disowned before the angels of God.<sup>10</sup> And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

<sup>11</sup> "When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say,<sup>12</sup> for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say."

- Can you picture Jesus in the middle of a group of disciples who are in turn surrounded by a pushy crowd? Are the disciples responsible for protecting Jesus from the crowd? What is the driving force behind the trampling crowd? What do they want? Jesus took this moment, not to shout out to the crowds, but to look into the eyes of his disciples. He wanted to give them the good stuff—the core teaching. He saw what was happening around them, and he taught them how to live differently—even after he was gone. What does it mean for you to live differently than the crowds of this world?
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- **Prayer Prompt: 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. (Romans 12.2)**
- *Jesus, I know that you are calling me to live in this world, but in a way that points to you. Guide me through your Word and through your Spirit. Amen.*

## TUESDAY: LUKE 12.1-12 (NIV)

- Jesus taught that a key element of avoiding the hypocrisy of the Pharisees was to understand and live like there are no secrets with God. Even though we profess that God is bigger than everything, we sometimes behave like God might not really understand what we are going through. At its worst, this leads to us forgetting that God knows our hearts. And we can begin to believe that we are able to keep things from God. Is there now, or has there ever been something in your life that you would prefer God not know about? What are all of the risks in bringing it into the light? What are the risks in keeping it hidden?
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- **Prayer Prompt: Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (Hebrews 4.13)**
- *God I want to lay my life bare before you. I want an authentic faith that points to you. Amen.*

**WEDNESDAY: LUKE 12.1-12 (NIV)**

- It is true that religion has sometimes promoted an unhealthy fear of God. There is a kind of fear that leads to disconnection and denial. But the Biblical use of the word fear in relation to God can also lead to a right relationship based on reverence and awe. God is so much bigger than us that we can feel small and insignificant, yet he knows and loves each of us deeply. Which of your regular practices show that you know what it means to fear God?

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- **Prayer Prompt: The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise. (Psalm 111.10)**
- *God, teach me what it means to fear you and no one else. I fear you, not because you are mean, but because of your great love for me. I am in awe of you God. Amen*

**THURSDAY: LUKE 12.1-12 (NIV)**

- Jesus has been addressing the hypocrisy of the Pharisees in this and other passages. A person who speaks one way and acts another is usually living with a lot of insecurity. It can come across as confidence, but God knows the heart. God sees and finds values in the little birds that fly around, surely he sees and finds great value in you. How can resting in that fact lead to both confidence and humility?

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- **Prayer Prompt: The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. (Jeremiah 31.3)**
- *God you see the small and insignificant things of this earth. And you see me. Thank you for your love for me that is beyond anything I could ever imagine or earn. Amen.*

## FRIDAY: LUKE 12.1-12 (NIV)

- The late, great author Brennan Manning wrote, *“The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians: who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, walk out the door, and deny Him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable.”* Jesus wants his disciples to live a life of integrity. His disciples confess that Jesus is Lord and live lives that reflect it. Who do you see living with this kind of integrity? How is your life confessing that Jesus is Lord?
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- **Prayer Prompt: If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (Romans 10.9)**
- *Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, you are the Lord, give me strength and words to profess openly. My trust is in you. Amen.*

## SATURDAY: LUKE 12.1-12 (NIV)

- Don't be hypocritical. We are challenged by this teaching because we see ourselves in it. We really want to follow Jesus and to be faithful, but there are times when we lose focus and forget what we are truly about. In Sunday's message, we thought briefly about the image of a courtroom. The Bible uses a lot of legal images. When you confess Jesus in the proceedings of this world, Jesus is testifying before heaven about your faithfulness. Regularly practicing your faith in Jesus Christ deepens your faith and brings greater alignment. Spend some time today thinking through your testimony. Imagine Jesus saying this about you, “This one is mine!”
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- **Prayer Prompt: Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. <sup>21</sup> And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister. (1 John 4.20-21)**
- *God, convict my heart when I limit the love you have poured into and through me. Give me a deep and abiding love for my brother and sister. Amen.*

## GROUP DISCUSSION

- Can you think of a time when you had an urgent message to share? How did it change your approach to a person or group?
- Is there something in your life that seems to have a larger impact than it should? (Like yeast in a loaf of bread?)
- Have you ever been tempted to keep something secret from God? What did that do to your relationship with God?
- Have you ever felt the need to tremble before God? Did it lead you to hide or to worship?
- Why is it sometimes so difficult to believe that God loves and values you more than the birds of the air?
- What could it look like for you to confess that Jesus is Lord in your daily life? At home? In the workplace? In the community?