

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotionals: Recognizing Sin for What It Is

PM Message by Bro. Mike Bentley – September 20, 2026

Recognizing Sin for What It Is: A Week of Reflection and Renewal

Day 1: The Nature of Sin and the Boundary of God's Law

Reading: 1 John 3:1-10

Devotional: Sin is not simply a mistake or a cultural misstep. It is lawlessness, a deliberate crossing of the boundary God has established for our good. God did not set His law in place as a tyrant demanding obedience for his own satisfaction. He set it in place as a Father who loves his children and knows what will harm them. When a parent pulls a child away from a hot stove, that intervention is love in action. God's commands function the same way. Every boundary He draws is drawn in love. Reflect today on whether you view God's law as a burden or as a gift.

Practical Application: Identify one area of your life where you have minimized or rationalized sin. Acknowledge it honestly before God in prayer, and ask Him to help you see it as He sees it.

Day 2: The Consequences of Sin -- Separation, Enslavement, and Eternal Loss

Reading: Isaiah 59:1-2; Romans 6:12-23

Devotional: Isaiah makes clear that God's ability to save is not limited, but sin creates a barrier between the soul and God. That separation is not God withdrawing from us out of indifference. It is the natural consequence of choosing lawlessness over relationship. Paul further reveals that sin does not simply damage the soul in isolated moments. It enslaves. The more a person yields to sin, the more difficult it becomes to resist it. What begins as a single compromise can become a chain. The wages of sin are not arbitrary. They are the earned result of a life lived apart from God. Reflect on the seriousness of that cost.

Practical Application: Spend time in honest self-examination. Ask yourself whether there is a pattern of sin in your life that has grown easier to repeat over time. Bring that pattern before God and seek accountability from a trusted brother or sister in Christ.

Day 3: The Love of God as the Foundation of His Law

Reading: 1 John 4:7-16; James 1:17

Devotional: It is impossible to rightly understand God's hatred of sin without first understanding His love. John declares plainly that God is love, and that this love was demonstrated not in abstract sentiment but in concrete sacrifice. He sent His Son. Every command God gives, every

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warning He issues, every consequence He reveals flows from that same love. He is not indifferent to our suffering. He is not pleased when the wicked perish. He desires fellowship with His creation, and sin destroys that fellowship. When we grasp that God's law is simply an extension of His love for us, obedience becomes something far different than mere rule-following. It becomes a response to grace.

Practical Application: Reread a passage of Scripture that contains a command you have found difficult to follow. Approach it today not as a rule but as an expression of God's love for you. Write down how that shift in perspective changes your response to it.

Day 4: The Cross as the Clearest Picture of How Seriously God Takes Sin

Reading: John 3:14-16; Hebrews 9:14, 22; 1 Peter 1:18-19

Devotional: The death of Jesus Christ on the cross was not incidental to God's plan. It was essential. John 3:14 uses a word that demands our attention: must. The Son of Man must be lifted up. There was no other way. The blood of Christ was the only sufficient payment for the debt sin created. When we are tempted to treat sin casually, to categorize it as small or manageable, we should return to the cross. The agony Christ endured, the rejection He suffered, the spiritual anguish of bearing the sins of all humanity, these are the truest measure of how terrible sin is in the sight of God. The cross does not minimize sin. It magnifies it.

Practical Application: Set aside time today to meditate specifically on the suffering of Christ. Consider not only the physical suffering but the spiritual weight He bore. Allow that reflection to produce genuine gratitude and a renewed commitment to avoid the sin that made His sacrifice necessary.

Day 5: The Hope of Salvation and the Warning of Eternal Separation

Reading: 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Romans 6:23; John 15:13

Devotional: The punishment for unrepentant sin is not temporary. Paul describes it as everlasting destruction, an eternal separation from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. That is the weight of what Christ stepped in to prevent. He laid down His life, as He Himself said in John 15, for His friends. Not because we deserved it, but because God refused to leave us without hope. The gift of eternal life is available, but it must be received on God's terms. The same God who warns of eternal separation is the same God who paid the price so that separation would not be our fate. Respond to that love today.

Practical Application: If you have been drifting in your walk with God, take deliberate steps today to return. Write out a specific commitment, whether returning to regular prayer, restoring a broken relationship, or obeying a command you have been avoiding. Share that commitment with someone who will hold you to it.