

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Based on John 13 and the Upper Room Discourse

Day 1: The Hour Has Come — Trusting God's Timing

Reading: John 13:1-3

Devotional: Throughout his ministry, Jesus repeatedly acknowledged that his hour had not yet arrived. Then, in one decisive moment, it had. He did not panic. He did not resist. He moved forward in full confidence, knowing where he came from and where he was going. That settled identity gave him extraordinary peace in an extraordinarily dangerous hour. When life feels urgent, overwhelming, or uncertain, the believer can draw from the same well. You know who you belong to. You know where you are going. Let that knowledge anchor your soul and quiet your fear today.

Reflection: What area of your life requires you to trust God's timing rather than your own?

Practical Application: Write down one situation where you have been striving to control the outcome. Surrender it in prayer today, acknowledging that God's timing is perfect.

Day 2: Loved to the Limit — The Depth of Christ's Love

Reading: Romans 8:35-39

Devotional: The sermon highlighted a striking phrase from John 13:1 — that Jesus loved his own to the end, meaning to the uttermost limit, to the absolute peak of what love can be. This was not a casual affection. It was a maxed-out, all-consuming, death-defying love directed at ordinary, flawed, sometimes faithless people. People like the disciples. People like you. Nothing in your past, present, or future can move you outside the reach of that love. The needle on the gauge of God's love for you is permanently buried at its highest point. Rest in that today.

Reflection: Do you live as though God's love for you is conditional or limited? What would change if you truly believed it was not?

Practical Application: Identify one lie you have believed about God's love for you. Find a passage of Scripture that directly contradicts that lie and commit it to memory this week.

Day 3: The Posture of Greatness — Servant Leadership

Reading: Philippians 2:5-11

Devotional: The disciples argued about who among them was the greatest. Meanwhile, the one who actually was the greatest quietly rose from the table, removed his outer garment, and knelt on a dirty

floor. Jesus did not leverage his authority to demand service. He used it to give service. This is the pattern he calls every believer to follow. True greatness in the kingdom of God is measured not by how many people serve you, but by how willingly and humbly you serve others. The towel, not the throne, is the symbol of Christlike leadership in this life.

Reflection: In what relationships or roles are you tempted to expect service rather than offer it?

Practical Application: Identify one person in your home, workplace, or church who carries a burden you could help lighten. Perform one specific act of humble service for that person this week without drawing attention to yourself.

Day 4: Dirty Feet and the Gospel — What You Bring to Christ

Reading: Isaiah 64:6, Titus 3:4-7

Devotional: The disciples brought nothing to the upper room but dirty feet. They had no ability to cleanse themselves. Jesus did everything. This is the picture of the gospel in its purest form. You bring your filth. Christ provides the cleansing. No amount of moral effort, religious activity, or personal reformation qualifies you for a right standing before God. Salvation belongs entirely to Christ. However, once you have been cleansed, sin in the daily walk of life can disrupt your fellowship with him. Confession restores what sin disturbs. The bath saves you. The washing keeps you walking closely with the one who saved you.

Reflection: Are you attempting to earn God's favor through your own effort, or are you resting in the finished work of Christ?

Practical Application: Spend time today in honest confession. Not to re-earn your salvation, but to restore the closeness of your fellowship with God that sin has disrupted.

Day 5: Washing Judas — Serving Those Who Have Wronged You

Reading: Matthew 5:43-48, Luke 23:34

Devotional: Judas was in the room. Jesus knew it. He washed his feet anyway. He looked at the man who would hand him over to his executioners, knelt before him, and served him. From the cross, he would ask the Father to forgive the very soldiers driving the nails. This is the standard Christ sets for his followers. It is not a comfortable standard. It cuts against every natural impulse toward self-protection and justice. But the servant is not greater than his master. If Christ could wash Judas and forgive his crucifiers, then by his grace, you can serve and forgive the person who has wronged you.

Reflection: Who is the Judas in your life — the person you have withheld service, grace, or forgiveness from? What is keeping you from extending what Christ has extended to you?

Practical Application: Take one concrete step toward reconciliation, forgiveness, or humble service toward someone who has wronged you. This does not require restored trust. It requires a willing heart and a first step.

The Stooping Servant Savior

There are moments in Scripture where the majesty of Jesus shines through in unmistakable glory—walking on water, healing the sick, raising the dead, turning water into wine. But in John 13, we see one of the most stunning displays of His glory, not through a miracle of power, but through an act of humility.

Jesus washes His disciples' feet.

At this point in John's Gospel, the tone has shifted. The public ministry of Jesus is drawing to a close. Opposition has intensified. The cross is near. John tells us, "Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father" (John 13:1). The hour that had not yet come throughout the Gospel has now arrived.

Jesus has less than 24 hours before the cross.

He knows where He came from. He knows where He is going. He knows the Father has given all things into His hands. He knows He possesses all authority.

And what does He do with that authority?

He gets up from the table, lays aside His outer garments, takes a towel, pours water into a basin, and begins to wash the dirty feet of His disciples.

The Highest Position, The Lowliest Posture

John wants us to feel the weight of this moment. Jesus is not unaware of who He is. He is not confused about His identity. He is not acting out of weakness or insecurity. He knows "that the Father had given all things into his hands" (John 13:3).

Jesus holds absolute divine authority.

He is the eternal Son of God. He is the One through whom all things were made. He is the Alpha and the Omega. He is the One before whom angels cry, "Holy, holy, holy."

And yet, this same Jesus stoops to the floor with a towel and a basin.

In that culture, foot washing was the work of the lowest servant. People walked dusty roads in sandals. Feet were filthy. When guests entered a home, someone needed to wash their feet. But in the upper room, there was no servant present. Each disciple apparently passed by the basin. Each one saw the need. But no one volunteered.

Why?

Because they were too proud.

Luke's Gospel tells us that the disciples were arguing about which of them was the greatest. No one wanted to take the lowest place. No one wanted to humble himself.

So Jesus did.

The One who was truly greatest became the servant of all.

All We Bring Is Our Filth

There is a beautiful picture of the gospel in this scene.

The disciples bring nothing to the moment but dirty feet. Jesus provides everything necessary for their cleansing. He takes the initiative. He stoops. He washes. He serves.

That is what Christ does for sinners.

We do not come to God carrying our righteousness, our accomplishments, our religious résumé, or our moral achievements. We come with our filth. We come with sin-stained hearts. We come unable to cleanse ourselves.

And Jesus does what only He can do.

He washes us.

As the old hymn says:

"Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

Salvation is not earned by our works. Cleansing is not achieved by our effort. Jesus paid it all. He does everything required to make us clean.

Peter's Refusal and Jesus' Response

When Jesus comes to Peter, Peter is shocked.

"Lord, do you wash my feet?" he asks.

Jesus answers, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand" (John 13:7).

Peter responds strongly: "You shall never wash my feet" (John 13:8).

In essence, Peter says, "No. Never. Not ever."

But Jesus replies, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me."

That is a sobering word.

There is no fellowship with Christ apart from being washed by Christ. There is no part with Jesus unless we receive His cleansing. Our pride may resist it. Our shame may make us feel unworthy. Our hard hearts may say, "Never." But Jesus makes it clear: being washed by Him is the only way to belong to Him.

Then Peter swings in the other direction: "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"

Jesus explains that the one who has bathed does not need another full bath, but only to wash his feet. This gives us a picture of the Christian life. When Christ saves us, we are made clean. Our union with Him is secure. But as we walk through this world, our feet still get dirty. Sin disrupts communion, even though it does not destroy our union with Christ.

Believers still need regular confession, repentance, and restoration.

We do not need to be saved over and over again. But we do need to keep coming to Jesus, allowing Him to cleanse us from the sin that clings to us as we walk through a fallen world.

Jesus Washed Judas' Feet

One of the most staggering parts of this passage is that Judas was still in the room.

Jesus knew Judas would betray Him. The devil had already put betrayal into Judas' heart. Jesus knew exactly what Judas was about to do.

And still, Jesus washed his feet.

He knelt before His betrayer. He served the one who would sell Him for silver. He looked Judas in the eye and extended humble love.

That should stop us in our tracks.

It is one thing to serve people who love us. It is another thing to serve people who are grateful. But Jesus serves His betrayer. He humbles Himself before someone who will wound Him deeply.

And then He says, "I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you" (John 13:15).

That means we do not get to choose humility only when it is convenient. We do not get to serve only the people who deserve it. We do not get to withhold love from those who have wronged us and still claim to be following the pattern of Jesus.

The question becomes personal: Who is your Judas?

Who has hurt you? Who has betrayed you? Who has wronged you? Who is difficult for you to love, serve, or forgive?

Jesus' example does not allow us to cling to prideful revenge. He calls us to take the lower place. To serve. To forgive. To humble ourselves.

The Pattern for Every Disciple

After washing their feet, Jesus puts His outer garments back on, returns to His place, and asks, "Do you understand what I have done to you?"

He tells them, "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am" (John 13:13).

Jesus does not deny His authority. He does not say, "I am not really Lord." He says, "You are right." He is Lord and Teacher.

Then He continues: "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."

The principle is clear: no servant is greater than his master.

If Jesus, the Lord of glory, stooped to serve, how can we refuse to serve?

If Jesus took the lowest place, how can we insist on being honored?

If Jesus humbled Himself, how can we cling to pride?

This applies everywhere—in our homes, workplaces, churches, neighborhoods, and relationships. If you are a husband, wife, parent, child, leader, employee, pastor, neighbor, or friend, the call is the same: follow the pattern of Christ.

Serve humbly.

Serve quietly.

Serve sacrificially.

Serve even when no one notices.

Serve even when it costs you.

Serve even those who have wronged you.

What Would You Do?

Imagine having 24 hours to live.

Imagine knowing you possess all authority.

What would you do?

Jesus washed feet.

He spent His final hours not grasping for comfort, demanding honor, or protecting Himself from humiliation. He served. He stooped. He loved His own “to the end”—to the uttermost.

This is the heart of our Savior.

And this is the pattern He gives to us.

So we should ask ourselves:

Does pride keep me from serving others?

Does pride keep me from being served by Christ?

Am I refusing the cleansing Jesus offers?

Who is God calling me to humbly serve?

Is there someone who has wronged me whom I need to love with Christlike humility?

The call of John 13 is not simply to admire Jesus’ humility. It is to receive His cleansing and follow His example.

The King of kings took up a towel.

May we do the same.