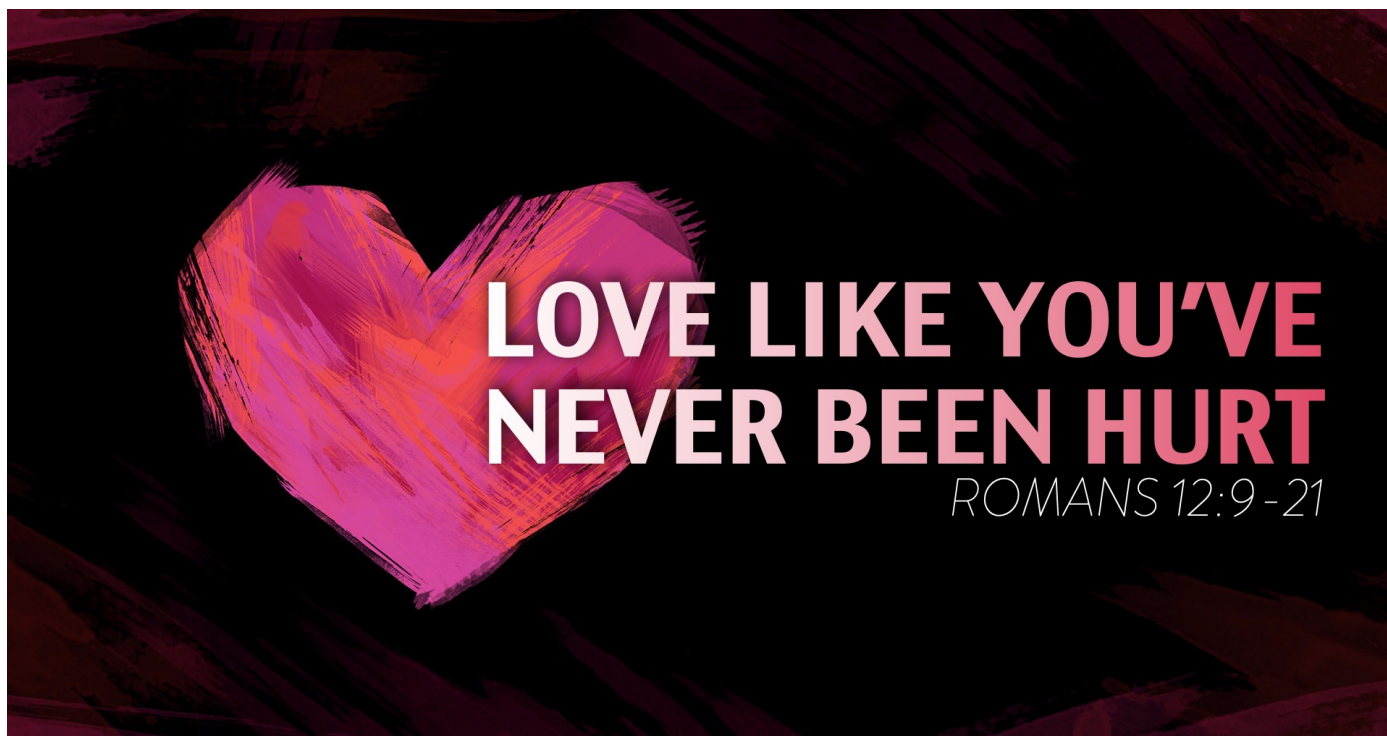




5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Love Like You Have Never Been Hurt

Day 1: The Command That Defies Human Nature

Reading: Matthew 5:43-48

Devotional: Jesus does not suggest we love our enemies — He commands it. This command exposes how far our natural instincts fall from God's standard. When someone wounds us deeply, every part of our flesh wants to recoil, retaliate, or withdraw. But Christ calls us to respond in the exact opposite direction. This is not weakness. It is the most demanding kind of strength there is. The ability to love someone who has hurt you is not produced by willpower alone. It is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit operating through a surrendered heart. Ask God today to replace your natural reactions with His.

Reflection: Who in your life is hardest to love right now? Bring that person before God in prayer today, not with a list of grievances, but with a sincere request for their well-being and salvation.

Practical Application: Write down the name of one person who has caused you pain. Pray specifically for that person once today, asking God to bless them and draw them closer to Himself.

Day 2: Releasing the Weight of Revenge

Reading: Romans 12:14-21

Devotional: Romans 12 dismantles our instinct for retaliation piece by piece. Paul instructs us not to repay evil with evil, not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought, and to leave vengeance entirely in the hands of God. This passage is not a passive suggestion. It is a complete reorientation of how a believer is meant to move through a world full of offense and injury. Holding onto the right to revenge feels like protection, but it is actually a prison. When we release our claim on payback, we are not letting the offender win. We are trusting that God sees, God knows, and God will act in His perfect time and righteousness.

Reflection: Is there a situation in your life where you have been holding onto the right to be angry, waiting for justice to come through your own efforts? What would it look like to truly hand that situation over to God?

Practical Application: Identify one area where you have been trying to settle a score, even subtly. Surrender it in prayer today and ask God to guard your heart against bitterness taking root.

Day 3: Forgiveness Does Not Mean Pretending

Reading: Hebrews 12:14-15

Devotional: Forgiveness is not the same as pretending the pain never happened. It is not minimizing the wrong done to you or forcing a relationship back to what it was before the wound occurred. Hebrews 12:15 warns that bitterness is not just a personal struggle — it is a root that grows and defiles many around it. Genuine forgiveness confronts the reality of the hurt and then makes a deliberate choice, empowered by the Holy Spirit, not to allow that hurt to define the relationship going forward. Peace, where possible, is worth pursuing. But peace begins internally, in the quiet surrender of your right to remain wounded.

Reflection: Have you confused forgiveness with reconciliation? Reconciliation requires two willing parties, but forgiveness is a decision you can make alone before God. Where do you stand in that process today?

Practical Application: Spend time in quiet prayer today asking the Holy Spirit to reveal any bitterness you may have dismissed or buried. Confess it honestly and ask for the grace to begin releasing it.

Day 4: Suffering, Sovereignty, and the Appointed Time

Reading: Psalm 31:14-15; Job 14:5

Devotional: Grief has a way of demanding answers that this side of heaven cannot fully provide. When loss comes through circumstances that feel unjust or preventable, the temptation is to allow anger to harden into a permanent posture of the heart. But Scripture affirms that our days are held in the hands of a sovereign God. This does not minimize the reality of suffering, nor does it excuse the actions of those who cause harm through careless or corrupt decisions. What it does is anchor the grieving heart to a truth larger than the pain itself — that nothing escapes God's awareness, and nothing overrides His authority over life and eternity.

Reflection: Have you allowed a season of grief or loss to produce bitterness toward God, toward people, or toward circumstances? How might surrendering those feelings to God's sovereignty begin to shift your perspective?

Practical Application: Write a brief, honest letter to God today about a loss or injustice that still causes you pain. Do not filter it. Then close the letter with a declaration, however small, that you trust His sovereignty over what you cannot understand.

Day 5: Loving Well Until the Very End

Reading: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8; John 13:34-35

Devotional: Love is not a feeling that rises and falls with circumstances. According to Scripture, it is a chosen, sustained action that endures even when it is not returned, even when it is not deserved, and even when the relationship has been fractured by deep wounds. The world will know we belong to Christ not by the eloquence of our theology but by the quality of our love for one another. This includes the people inside our homes, the people who have disappointed us, and the people we have privately written off. Loving like you have never been hurt does not erase the memory of the wound. It refuses to let the wound have the final word.

Reflection: What would it look like in your daily life to love the people around you as a deliberate, Spirit-empowered choice rather than as a response to how well they treat you?

Practical Application: Choose one relationship today that has grown cold or strained. Take one concrete step toward it, whether that is a phone call, a kind word, a prayer offered on their behalf, or simply a decision in your heart to stop withholding goodwill. Let love have the final word.