



FORGIVENESS

STOP KEEPING SCORE & START LOSING COUNT
MATTHEW 18:21-22

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Based on the Sermon: "Forgiveness -- Stop Keeping Score and Start Losing Count"

Day 1: The Weight We Were Never Meant to Carry

Reading: Matthew 18:21-22

Devotional: Peter thought seven times was generous. Jesus answered with a number so large it was meant to stop the counting altogether. Forgiveness, in God's economy, is not a transaction with a limit -- it is a posture of the heart. Many of us carry offenses from years, even decades, ago. We remember the year, the month, sometimes the very hour we were wronged. That mental scoreboard was never meant to be yours to maintain. God keeps no such record against those who come to Him in repentance. Today, ask yourself honestly: whose name still makes your heart race with bitterness? That name is where your prayer needs to begin.

Practical Application: Write down the name of one person you have struggled to forgive. Do not send it to anyone. Simply bring that name before God in prayer today and ask Him to begin softening your heart toward that person.

Day 2: The Debt You Could Never Repay

Reading: Matthew 18:23-27

Devotional: The servant in Jesus's parable owed the king the equivalent of ten million dollars -- an impossible debt by any human standard. Yet the king, moved by compassion, forgave every cent. This is a picture of what Christ has done for each of us. Our sin debt was staggering, unpayable, and yet the King of kings canceled it entirely at the cross. This is not a small thing. It is the defining act of all human history. When we truly grasp the magnitude of what we have been forgiven, it becomes impossible to justify withholding that same grace from others. Grace received must become grace extended.

Practical Application: Spend time today meditating on a specific sin or failure that God has forgiven you for. Let the weight of that forgiveness settle deeply into your spirit before you ask anything else of Him today.

Day 3: The Unforgivable Act of Not Forgiving

Reading: Matthew 6:14-15 and Matthew 18:28-35

Devotional: The servant who was forgiven ten million dollars turned around and choked a man who owed him a fraction of that amount. The witnesses were grieved. The king was furious. And the servant was handed over to tormentors. Jesus concluded the parable with a sobering statement -- that the heavenly Father will treat us the same way if we refuse to forgive from the heart. This is not a minor footnote in Scripture. Unforgiveness is not simply a bad habit or an emotional struggle. According to Jesus, it is a barrier between you and the forgiveness of God. This truth demands our full and serious attention.

Practical Application: Examine your heart today for any unforgiveness you may have labeled as something else -- distance, indifference, or simply "moving on." Ask God to reveal whether true forgiveness has actually taken root, or whether bitterness is still quietly operating beneath the surface.

Day 4: Opposition That Lifts You Higher

Reading: 1 Kings 19:1-18

Devotional: After one of the greatest miracles of his life, Elijah ran in fear and collapsed in exhaustion. He had been lied about, blamed, hated, and threatened. Yet God did not abandon him in the cave. He sent provision. He spoke in a still, small voice. And He gave Elijah a new assignment. The opposition that had pressed against Elijah his entire life did not ultimately destroy him -- it preceded one of the most dramatic departures in all of Scripture, a fiery chariot into heaven. What the enemy intends to use to take you down, God can use to take you up. Your pain is not the end of your story.

Practical Application: Identify one area of your life where opposition or hurt has caused you to withdraw or give up. Bring that area before God today and ask Him to reframe your perspective -- to show you how He might be using that resistance to lift you rather than limit you.

Day 5: Keep Tapping -- Forgiveness Comes in the Process

Reading: Matthew 7:7-8 and Colossians 3:12-14

Devotional: Forgiveness rarely arrives all at once. Like ketchup in a glass bottle, it often comes slowly -- but it comes. The key is not to stop tapping. Jesus instructed His followers to keep asking, keep seeking, and keep knocking. These are not one-time actions. They are a sustained posture of dependence on God. If you have said the words "I forgive you" but still feel the sting return when that person's name is mentioned, do not be discouraged. Keep praying. Keep forgiving. Keep asking God to do what you cannot do on your own. Healing is not always instant, but it is always possible when you refuse to quit.

Practical Application: Commit to a seven-day prayer practice focused specifically on one relationship or offense where forgiveness feels incomplete. Each day, pray briefly for the person who hurt you -- not for God to change them, but for God to bless them. Notice what begins to shift in your own heart by the end of the week.

"Getting hurt is a reality. Getting and staying bitter is a reaction." -- Pastor's sermon