

DAILY READING PLAN

Week of November 7, 2021

Community...It Starts Here:
Forgive One Another
Colossians 3:12-17



Day One: Read Psalm 103:8-12

⁸ *The Lord is compassionate and merciful,
slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.*

⁹ *He will not constantly accuse us,
nor remain angry forever.*

¹⁰ *He does not punish us for all our sins;
he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve.*

¹¹ *For his unfailing love toward those who fear him
is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth.*

¹² *He has removed our sins as far from us
as the east is from the west.*

- Do you believe that your faults and failures are forgiven and forgotten by God? When do you struggle to fully embrace this truth? Seek to fully embrace it today.

Day Two: Read Matthew 18:21-34

²¹ *Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?"* ²² *"No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!"* ²³ *"Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him."* ²⁴ *In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars.* ²⁵ *He couldn't pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt.* ²⁶ *"But the man fell down before his master and begged him, 'Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.'"* ²⁷ *Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.* ²⁸ *"But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment."* ²⁹ *"His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it,' he pleaded."* ³⁰ *But his creditor wouldn't wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full."* ³¹ *"When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened."* ³² *Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me.'"* ³³ *Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?"* ³⁴ *Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt.*

- Why do you think that the forgiven servant in the parable was unable or unwilling to forgive his fellow servant? Is it possible that he doubted the King's promise to forgive his own debt? What causes you to struggle to forgive?

Day Three: Read Genesis 50:14-21

¹⁴ *After burying Jacob, Joseph returned to Egypt with his brothers and all who had accompanied him to his father's burial.* ¹⁵ *But now that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers became fearful. "Now Joseph will show his anger and pay us back for all the wrong we did to him," they said.* ¹⁶ *So they sent this message to Joseph: "Before your father died, he instructed us* ¹⁷ *to say to you: 'Please forgive your brothers for the great wrong they did to you—for their sin in treating you so cruelly.' So we, the servants of the God of your father, beg you to forgive our sin."* *When Joseph received the message, he broke down and wept.* ¹⁸ *Then his brothers came and threw themselves down before Joseph. "Look, we are your slaves!" they said.* ¹⁹ *But Joseph replied, "Don't be afraid of me. Am I God, that I can punish you?"* ²⁰ *You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.* ²¹ *No, don't be afraid. I will continue to take care of you and your children."* *So he reassured them by speaking kindly to them.*

- Considering all the horrible things that Joseph’s brothers did to him, how can Joseph possibly forgive them? On what basis does he claim to be able to forgive? Can you forgive on that same basis?

Day Four: Read Matthew 6:7-14

⁷ “When you pray, don’t babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. ⁸ Don’t be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! ⁹ Pray like this:

Our Father in heaven,

may your name be kept holy.

¹⁰ *May your Kingdom come soon.*

*May your will be done on earth,
as it is in heaven.*

¹¹ *Give us today the food we need,*

¹² *and forgive us our sins,
as we have forgiven those who sin against us.*

¹³ *And don’t let us yield to temptation,
but rescue us from the evil one.*

¹⁴ *If you forgive those who sin against you,
your heavenly Father will forgive you.”*

- Is God’s forgiveness of us dependent upon our willingness or ability to forgive others? If so, how is this Good News of grace? Is there another way to understand Jesus’ words? Is it possible that our unwillingness to forgive somehow closes us from being able to receive God’s forgiveness even when it’s offered?

Day Five: Read Matthew 5:43-48

⁴³ “You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’ and hate your enemy. ⁴⁴ But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! ⁴⁵ In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. ⁴⁶ If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. ⁴⁷ If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. ⁴⁸ But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

- Do you struggle to forgive those who have wounded you? Do you harbor resentment and bitterness? Try praying today for your “enemies” and see how the practice shapes your heart for love and forgiveness.