

# 30 DAYS IN THE BIBLE

Click [here](#) to read Matthew 18

Key Verse – Matthew 18:21-22

Have you ever been hurt by someone? Really hurt, so much that the thought of that person brings forth feelings of mixed anger and pain and sadness? It can't be just me, can it? Or perhaps what comes easier to your mind is a situation where the cause of the hurt is insignificant when taken in isolation, but added to a great pile of pre-existing, repetitive hurt, it results in a cumulative amount of bitterness. Either way, the unfortunate reality of our humanity is that we all have the potential to hurt other people and be hurt ourselves. This vulnerability is a double-edged sword that allows us access to both incredibly positive emotions along with incredibly negative ones. The task at hand for us is to navigate our emotions in a Christ-like manner. In Matthew 18, Jesus has been telling parables and such with an overarching theme of describing some traits of the Kingdom of God. All these lessons and stories have gotten Peter thinking, and he poses the aforementioned question. He's likely looking back on his life, reflecting on the hurts and grudges he's carrying inside himself, and wondering just how much good Jesus expects of him. News flash Pete, Jesus asks for a lot.

When posing his question, Peter sets the bar pretty high, by his standards. After all, the Jewish religion was not big on forgiveness without reparations. Large swaths of the Law deal with justice among the Israelites, and the correct responses to the mistakes and misdeeds of the Jews. There were so many rules for money to be paid out, sacrifices to be made and so on as, a way for the Jewish people to make amends for their sins and shortcomings. Jesus' insistence on this was one part of what made him starkly different from the Pharisees and other religious leaders within Judaism. The idea of freely offered and freely given forgiveness was wildly radical in the eyes of a Jewish man. To fully understand Peter's question, and Jesus' insane response, we need to look at the special significance and deeper meaning the Jews placed on certain numbers. Seven may have been the most significant number from a Jewish perspective. To them, it was symbolic of divine completion, or perfection. It signified holiness, and the process of sanctification to holiness.



So when Peter asks if he needs to forgive someone seven times, he is asking if he needs to forgive them completely, in a manner reminiscent of all the holiness of the Law and the prophets. It's the most radical forgiveness Peter can imagine, still Jesus asks for more. With his statement of "seventy times seven", Jesus is telling Peter that he needs to forgive, in a sense, beyond the holiness of the Law. There is a new standard now. Bible commentator David Brown puts it this way: "So long as it shall be needed and sought, you are never to come to the point of refusing forgiveness sincerely asked."

What a challenge for us. Can we honestly say we forgive this way? Or do we fix reasonable limits on how much we will put up with, how far we will go for someone who hurts us? Let's reflect today, examining our hearts to see if we truly are willing to forgive others, especially those who have wronged us, the way God forgives us.

**What Scripture can I meditate on today?**

**What did God speak to me today?**

**How can I respond in obedience?**

**How can I pray?**