

## 5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Based on Themes from the Sermon on Matthew 11

### Day 1: When Faith Wrestles With Doubt

Reading: Matthew 11:1-6 -- John the Baptist, imprisoned, sends messengers to ask whether Jesus is truly the Messiah. Jesus responds by pointing to the evidence of His works rather than defending Himself with words.

#### Devotional:

Even the greatest among us have wrestled with doubt. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from birth, witnessed the Spirit descend on Jesus at baptism, and still sent word from prison asking, "Are you the one?" Doubt does not disqualify faith -- it reveals where faith is being tested. When your circumstances feel like a contradiction to what God has promised, bring your questions directly to Him. Jesus did not rebuke John for asking. He answered with evidence. When you find yourself questioning God in a dark season, look back at the evidence of what He has already done in your life. That evidence is your anchor.

Reflection Question: What evidence of God's faithfulness can you point to today when doubt begins to rise?

Practical Application: Write down three specific moments in your life where God came through in a way you did not expect. Return to that list the next time doubt tempts you to question His character.

### Day 2: Blessed Is the One Who Does Not Fall Away

Reading: Matthew 11:7-11 -- Jesus speaks to the crowd about John, calling him the greatest born of women, while also declaring that even the least in the kingdom of heaven surpasses him in terms of what grace has made available.

Devotional:

Jesus closes His response to John's disciples with a statement that is easy to read past but impossible to outgrow: blessed is the one who does not stumble on account of Him. God does not always perform the way we expect. He does not always answer the way we script. He does not always rescue on our timeline. The temptation in those moments is to walk away -- from church, from prayer, from faith itself. But Jesus calls it a blessing to hold on. Holding on when nothing makes sense is not weakness. It is the very definition of faith. The blessing is not found in having all the answers. It is found in trusting the One who does.

Reflection Question: Is there an area of your life where Jesus has not performed the way you expected, and how has that affected your trust in Him?

Practical Application: Spend five minutes in honest prayer today. Tell God exactly where you are struggling to trust Him, and then ask Him to strengthen your faith rather than simply change your circumstances.

Day 3: The Danger of Our Own Standard of Holiness

Reading: Matthew 11:16-19 -- Jesus compares His generation to children who cannot be satisfied, criticizing those who rejected John for being too strict and rejected Jesus for being too social. He concludes that wisdom is proved right by her actions.

Devotional:

John the Baptist lived a life of radical separation. Jesus moved freely among sinners and tax collectors. Both were doing the will of the Father. Yet the crowd found fault with both. This reveals something uncomfortable about human nature: we often judge others not by God's standard but by our own. We build a picture in our minds of what a godly person should look like, and we measure everyone -- including God Himself -- against that picture. John

struggled because Jesus did not look like what he expected holiness to look like. Before judging what others are doing, ask God to show you whether your standard is truly His.

Reflection Question: In what ways have you judged another person's faith or lifestyle based on your own expectations rather than Scripture?

Practical Application: The next time you find yourself forming a critical opinion about someone else's walk with God, pause and pray the simple prayer: "God, show me how you see this person."

#### Day 4: Suffering Does Not Mean Abandonment

Reading: Hebrews 4:14-16 -- The passage describes Jesus as a high priest who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses because He was tempted in every way, just as we are, yet without sin. It invites us to approach the throne of grace with confidence.

Devotional:

John the Baptist sat in a prison cell. Jesus never came to visit. No angel broke down the door. No miracle set him free. And yet the same Jesus who had healed the blind and raised the dead knew exactly where John was and what he was enduring. Suffering does not mean God has forgotten you. It means He is present in a way that does not always look the way we expect. Hebrews reminds us that Jesus is not a distant high priest who cannot relate to pain. He entered into human experience fully -- hunger, exhaustion, rejection, and loss -- so that when you suffer, you are never suffering alone.

Reflection Question: What prison are you currently sitting in -- whether physical, emotional, relational, or spiritual -- and have you invited Jesus into that space honestly?

Practical Application: Identify one burden you have been carrying privately. Bring it to God in prayer today with complete honesty, trusting that He is not surprised by it and is not indifferent to it.

## Day 5: Faithfulness to the End

Reading: Romans 8:28 -- Paul writes that God works all things together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. The condition Paul attaches is love -- continuing to love God through every circumstance.

### Devotional:

John the Baptist died in prison. His head was delivered on a platter to a woman who despised him. From the outside, it looked like a story with no redemption. But John had done his job. He had prepared the way. He had pointed to the Lamb of God. He had held his conviction even when it cost him everything. God's promise to work all things to good is not a promise that every chapter will feel good. It is a promise that the Author of the story does not waste a single page. Faithfulness to the end is not about seeing the resolution. It is about trusting the One who writes it.

Reflection Question: Are you able to trust God with the chapters of your life that have not yet been resolved or explained?

Practical Application: Commit this week to beginning each morning with thanksgiving before making any requests. Start with who God is before you bring Him what you need. Let gratitude reorient your faith before the day has a chance to challenge it.