



Approaching God

Begin your time with an opening prayer

Take a moment to quiet your heart and ask God to help you experience his presence today. Ask Him to free you from any distractions as you begin to read and meditate on today's passages.

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation - Slowly Read the Following Passages

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.

Matthew 18:15-20

15 “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. **16** But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ **17** If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. **18** “Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. **19** “Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. **20** For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

John 21:15-19

15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” **16** Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.” **17** The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. **18** Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” **19** Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”

Colossians 3:12-13

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. **13** Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Thoughts to Ponder - Making Room for Your Betrayers

Read the short essay from Lore Ferguson Wilbert - <https://shereadstruth.com/making-room-for-your-betrayers/>

This is a true story.

I invited my enemy to dinner on purpose. There was no applause or great relief or gratefulness on her part. After all, she didn't know she was my enemy. She didn't know the words she'd said about me had made their way back to my ears. She didn't know how wounded I'd felt by her piercing remarks about my life, my home, my personality, and my portion. She didn't know God had set that table for me in the presence of my enemy. And so, she enjoyed my wine and my bread, my Brussels sprouts with bacon, my perfectly roasted pork tenderloin, and my chocolate brownies, still gooey from the oven and topped with a small dollop of ice cream. She ate it all up and still left my enemy. Months later, more of her words made their way back to me, and I planned another dinner, determined to win her affections, her heart, her repentance, or at least the absence of her criticism.

This is a true story, of sorts, but not entirely the way I've told it to you. The truer story is that I was the enemy and God was my ever-present and gracious host. Again and again, He laid the feast before me, knowing the wounds of words like mine. Yet He invited me back again, and again, and again. This is the God who loves us. I have often thought about the small verse that follows Peter's first denial: "Now the servants and the officials had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold. They were standing there warming themselves, and Peter was standing with them, warming himself" ([John 18:18](#)). I think, here was Peter, denying Christ and warming himself by a fire God created. But Peter was not just denying his relationship with Christ. In a way, he was also denying Christ's divinity. He partook of the hospitality of God in the common grace of warmth on a cold night and then left the fire as if he were God's enemy. We are no different.

There are books aplenty with ideas for dinner parties and table settings, inspirational images and four-course meal plans, but there is no recipe for showing hospitality to those who have cursed you, except one: the imitation of God. With unimaginable hospitality, God creates a feast, and invites all the world—His own creation—to partake of it. He does so in the face of our repeated wrongs done against Him. Our gracious God invites His enemies to warm themselves by the fire. He spreads out a table in their presence ([Psalm 23:5](#)). He rescues the oxen of those who hate Him ([Exodus 23:4-5](#)). He blesses those who curse Him ([Luke 6:28](#))—and on and on. His hospitality knows no bounds.

The story I began with is true of me, and it's true of you too; we were enemies of God ([Romans 5:10](#)). But the story is also true in other ways. There are those who have gossiped about me, who have slandered and cursed and wronged me. Yet God invites me to imitate Him. The world says to stop offering grace, to withhold good until it's deserved. But the gospel saves the best wine for last, and it sets an even finer spread than each and every time before.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Why does scripture urge us to make room for those who betray us?
2. Who is a specific person in your life who has betrayed you or someone you love? Think of that person's name or write it down.

Close in Prayer:

Pray for this person, thanking God that he created every man and woman in His image, giving them worth, value, and dignity. Ask God to give you courage to forgive them and make room for those who have hurt you.