

Evangelical Covenant Church  
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[www.covchurch.org/humantrafficking](http://www.covchurch.org/humantrafficking)

## 5-Day Scripture Reading Guide on Modern-day Slavery

*Remember...*

**BREAK THE CHAINS**  
*seek justice + defend the weak*



**“Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.”**

Hebrews 13:3

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## Remember...

*Deeply ingrained in the collective psyche of Western culture is the notion that slavery ended in the nineteenth century. In our own day, however, a thriving underground market in human beings has emerged once again. 27 million people are in some form of slavery today. More people are in slavery today than at any other time in human history, including all those seized from Africa during the four centuries of the trans-Atlantic slave-trade.*

*Modern-day slavery respects no borders. Therefore, it will take a concerted movement to end it once again. You may not have known this before, but now you do.*

*As you read and reflect on God's heart for the oppressed, may you remember those who are enslaved today and in some way enter into their suffering in order to be part of God's rescue work.*

## DAY 5

## LUKE 4:14-21

**“...to proclaim freedom for the prisoners...”**

### Read

Note verse 18:

18 The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

### Reflect

Reflect on that unique day in a Jewish synagogue with the long-awaited Messiah in its midst and yet no one yet recognizing him as such.

Reflect on each phrase of the prophecy and those impacted by them. How are they being fulfilled today?

Reflect on God's choice to work through ordinary people like us to fulfill his promises. Are we more inclined to respond with “Who? Me?!” or “Here am I, send me”?

Reflect on those who are poor, blind and oppressed who desperately need Jesus' intervention. What is their hope?

### Respond

*All-powerful God, we thank you for sending Jesus in fulfillment of your many prophecies. Thank you, Jesus, for your sacrifice that broke the power of sin and evil. Thank you that you continue to set the prisoners free, both from spiritual and literal bondage. Empower me to bring hope to those in bondage today.*

*Amen.*

## DAY 4

## LUKE 11:37-44

**“...but you neglect justice and mercy.”**

### Read

Note verses 41 and 42:

41 ...be generous to the poor, and everything will be clean for you.

42 ...you give God a tenth...but you neglect justice and mercy. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.

### Reflect

Reflect on Jesus' strong words to the religious leaders of his day. What was the core issue?

Reflect on Jesus' contrast between having right outward appearances with being generous to the poor. Why do you think he chose generosity to the poor as his example?

Reflect on neglecting justice and mercy. Would you like to grow in this area and learn how to be a follower of Jesus engaging both compassion and justice issues?

### Respond

*Righteous God, it is far easier for me to point a finger than recognize the inner condition of my own cup. I want to be clean in all ways. Purify my heart. By your infinite grace, enable me to discern how I can engage issues of justice and mercy in your name and in your power.*

Amen.

## DAY 1

## Psalm 10

**“But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted...”**

### Read

Note verses 11 and 14:

11 The wicked say to themselves, “God will never notice; he covers his face and never sees.”

14 But you, God see the trouble of the afflicted; you consider their grief and take it in hand.

### Reflect

Reflect on the different names used for the oppressed in this psalm. Consider them in light of modern-day slaves.

Reflect on the ways the oppressors gain more victims. Modern-day slaves are being victimized in very similar schemes.

Reflect on the attitude of the oppressors. Imagine the attitude of today's perpetrators.

Reflect on God's response to the oppressed and the oppressor. How does this encourage you as you pray for modern-day slaves?

### Respond

Holy God, you see the evil schemes of the oppressors; your word tell us they will perish from the land. And you see the trouble of the afflicted and hear their cries. You are their strong helper. Restore hope to their failing hearts. And give me courage to be an agent of your hope.

Amen.

## DAY 2

## Psalm 82

**“Rescue the weak and the needy...”**

### Read

Note verses 3 and 4:

3 Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.

4 Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

### Reflect

Reflect on the tension the author feels about the injustice he sees and the power of God to intervene.

Reflect on the vanity of those who oppress the weak and consider it in light of the God who judges the earth.

Reflect on reasons the author turns to God to rescue the weak. Reflect on your own reasons to turn to God to rescue modern-day slaves. Do you feel the author’s same tension?

Reflect on God’s judgment which begins and ends this psalm. How do you see God’s judgment?

### Respond

*Holy God, I am both comforted and encouraged that you preside in the great assembly. While slavery flourishes today, I know that you are the ultimate judge who will judge all people. I pray that you will rescue the weak and the needy. Show me how I am to be your hands and feet.*

*Amen.*

## DAY 3

## Isaiah 58:1-12

**“...to loose the chains of injustice...”**

### Read

Note verses 2 and 6:

2 For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways.

6 Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice...?

### Reflect

Reflect on the tone of voice in the opening verse. What does that tell you?

Reflect on God’s view of his people in verses 2 through 5, particularly verse 2. Consider your individual and corporate worship in light of this description.

Reflect on God’s heart for his people to address injustice in the world. Consider an example of each from the news today.

Reflect on God’s desire to respond to us when we engage the injustices that break his heart.

### Respond

*Just God, I hear your word to your people with both fear and hope. Forgive us for wanting merely to receive your grace and not to extend it to others. We are more comfortable singing “Count Your Many Blessings” than “Make Me a Blessing”. Yet your promise of renewal and healing to those who “loose the chains” gives me hope! I am eager to know your ways.*

*Amen.*