

August 10, 2026

Stop Keeping Score

August Series: Christ-Centered Relationships

Week Focus: Grace Again

Scripture – Matthew 18:21–22 - *"Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.'"*

Devotional Reflection

It is easy to keep score in relationships without realizing we are doing it. We remember who apologized last, who initiated the last conversation, how many times we have been disappointed, and how often we have already extended another chance. Over time, an invisible record can begin forming in our hearts. Instead of simply seeing the person, we begin seeing everything they have done wrong. What started as hurt can slowly become a running account of what we believe they owe us.

Peter's question to Jesus reveals this very human tendency. He wanted to know how many times forgiveness was required. Peter was willing to forgive, but he wanted to know when he had done enough. Jesus' response challenged the entire idea of calculated forgiveness. His answer was not intended to give Peter a larger number to count toward; it was intended to develop a heart that was no longer controlled by counting. Christ-centered forgiveness is not about maintaining a record until someone reaches their limit. It is about developing a posture of grace.

Keeping score can quietly turn relationships into transactions. We begin thinking, **"I did this for you, so you should do this for me,"** or, **"I forgave you before, so you should not need forgiveness again."** Eventually, our kindness, patience, and forgiveness become dependent upon the other person's performance. But grace operates differently. Grace does not pretend that wrong never happened, nor does it eliminate accountability. Grace simply refuses to allow the record of another person's failures to become the controlling force in our hearts.

The ability to stop keeping score begins when we remember how God has treated us. None of us has needed His mercy only once. We have needed patience more than once, forgiveness more than once, correction more than once, and another opportunity more than once. Yet God's grace continues to meet us. Remembering how often we have been recipients of grace produces humility when someone else needs grace from us. We are not people who have graduated from needing mercy; we live by God's mercy every day.

Today, ask God to reveal any scorecards you may still be carrying. There may be an offense you continue replaying, a disappointment you continually bring back into present conversations, or a relationship where you are constantly measuring who has done more. Forgiveness may not instantly restore trust or remove the need for wisdom, but it can begin by surrendering the need to keep count. Jesus invites us to put down the scorecard and allow His grace to shape our hearts. When the temptation to count rises again, choose **grace again**.

Focus for Today

Grace does not keep a running record of how many times it has already been extended.

Practice

- Ask God to reveal one relationship where you may have been keeping score.
 - Ask yourself: **"What am I still counting?"** An apology? A disappointment? Who called first? How many chances you have given? How often you have been hurt?
 - Bring that specific "score" before God and intentionally surrender it to Him.
 - Instead of rehearsing what the other person owes you, spend a few moments remembering the grace God has repeatedly extended to you.
 - When you are tempted to pick the scorecard back up, remind yourself: **"I will choose grace again."**
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Prayer

Father, thank You for the grace and mercy You continually give me. Show me where I have been keeping score in my relationships. Help me release the records I have been carrying and give me a heart that reflects the grace of Jesus. Give me wisdom where it is needed, but keep bitterness and resentment from taking root in me. When I am tempted to count offenses again, help me choose grace again. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Reflection Question

Is there someone whose past mistakes I am still allowing to determine how I see them today? What would it look like for me to put down the scorecard and place that relationship into God's hands?