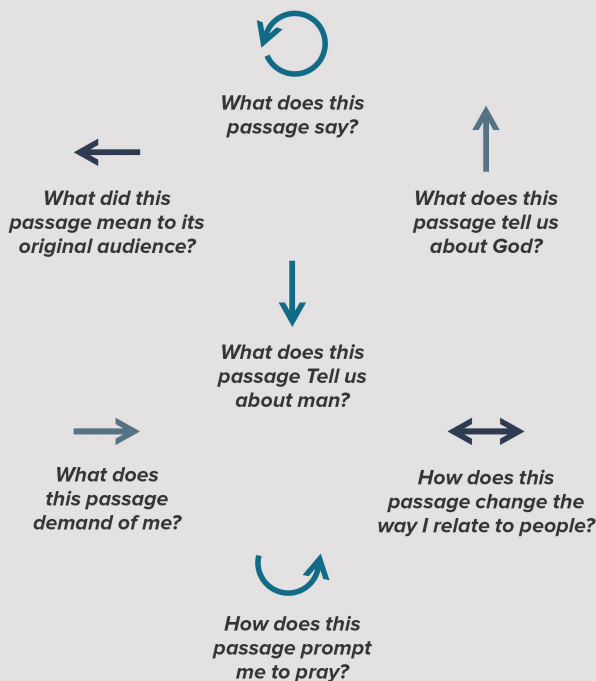


DAILY DEVOTIONS



The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Day One **JAMES 1:12**

Trials refer not only to the difficulties we will face in this life, but specifically to our response to these hardships. The ways we respond to trials prove the nature of our faith—whether it’s counterfeit or genuine. Because we live in a world broken by sin, we will face difficult times. Worldly people respond with complaining, anger, and a whole host of other inappropriate behaviors when their world falls apart. However, when we respond to trouble with grace and in ways that honor God, it accomplishes two things. First, our faithfulness proves that our faith is genuine, allowing us to experience peace. Beyond this, James teaches that the one who endures trials is blessed. For those who live faithfully through a lifetime of frustrations and difficulties, we will experience the joys of eternal life in heaven with Christ.

➤ **When has a hardship tested your faith?**

➤ **How do you generally respond when things go wrong?**

Day Two

JAMES 1:13-15



When things go wrong in our lives, we may sometimes be tempted to complain about the ways God treats us. However, we must understand, God is never the one who tempts us to sin. When we face hardship and we're tempted to have a bad attitude, or even when we may be tempted to turn away from God, it's because of our own flesh. When we live faithfully, trials serve to increase our faith. However, when we respond selfishly and sinfully and without a proper understanding of the nature of trials, we will be drawn toward deeper sin. This is why it's so important to understand who God is, as well as our own nature.

- **When have you been tempted to blame God for the things that go wrong in your life?**
- **When we're tempted to sin, who is to blame? Why do you think this?**

Day Three

JAMES 1:16-18

Though we may be tempted to blame God for the things that go wrong in our lives, the truth is there's only one person to blame—ourselves. God, on the other hand, gives us access to His grace. Grace refers specifically to God's giving us a good gift that we don't deserve. The truth is that because of our sin, we deserve God's punishment. Instead, God lavishes on us blessings that we could never earn. He is our faithful Father, and there is no darkness in Him. Because of His great love for us, He chose to bless us in ways that we would never have imagined when we didn't deserve anything good. So, when we are tempted to think that God is responsible for our trouble—don't be deceived! Instead, remember that we have a perfect heavenly Father who provides us with all we need to live a blessed life.

- **What good things has God given to you that you didn't deserve?**
- **What difference should it make in your life to know that every good thing you have comes from God?**

Day Four

JAMES 1:19

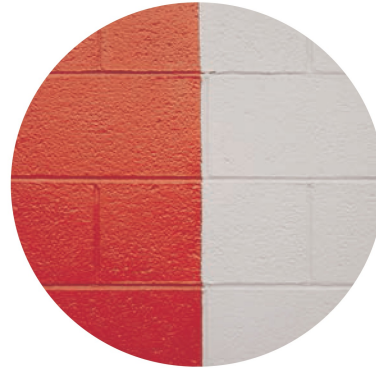
When things go wrong in your life, how do you immediately respond? For many people, it's with a whole lot of complaining. However, Philippians 2:14 teaches that we're to do everything—let's say it again, *everything*—without grumbling or complaining. The natural, worldly response to things going wrong in our lives is to fuss about it to anyone who will listen. However, this never makes things better. But continual complaining can certainly do damage in ways we're not aware of at all. James is referring to people specifically complaining about the trials God has allowed in their lives. For some reason, we may think that because we're God's children, we should have an easy, comfortable life. This kind of reasoning is simply wrong. Jesus, God's own Son, faced the most difficult trials imaginable, and since we are called to follow Christ, we should expect the same. When life is difficult, instead of complaining, we should pray and study Scripture—if we're willing to listen, God will speak to us, helping us to understand that trials have a purpose.

➤ **When have you fallen into complaining?**

➤ **Why is it so important to listen—specifically to God—before we talk about the difficult things we face?**

Day Five

JAMES 1:20



Christians often seek to justify our anger with the idea that Jesus became angry—and He did. However, if we want to understand if the anger we feel is healthy or not, we need to understand the reasons Jesus was angry. In Mark 3, we see that Jesus was angry over the religious leaders' being more concerned with their legalistic standards than ministering to a man who was suffering. In Mark 11, we see Jesus driving merchants out of the temple out of zeal for His Father's house. Jesus was angry over the mistreatment of the vulnerable and over the dishonor of His Father, but never for selfish reasons. Our anger is almost always selfish, so we need to be very careful never to justify anger that doesn't accomplish God's purposes.

➤ **Why is anger often so destructive?**

➤ **How can we become passionate about God's honor in the ways Jesus was?**