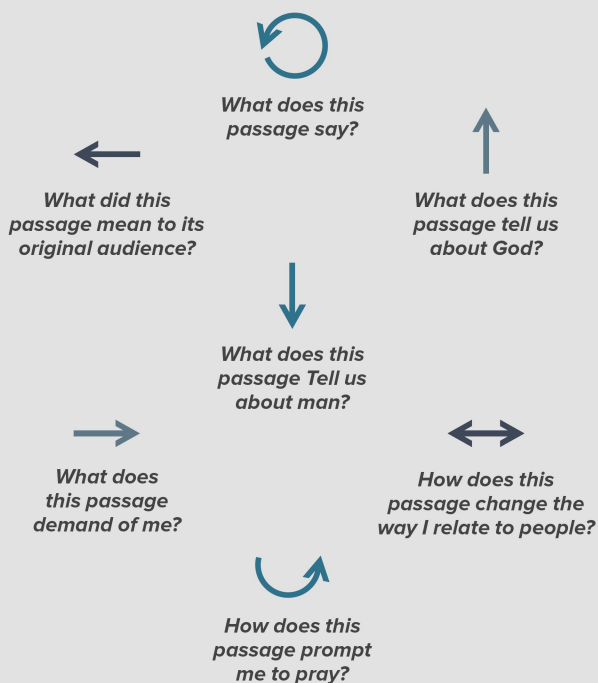


# DAILY DEVOTIONS



## The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



### Day One

## 1 PETER 4:7

When we think of “end,” the first thing that often comes to mind is that something will stop or cease to be. This isn’t what Peter means. Instead, he’s referring to a goal being reached—crossing the finish line where we’ll receive the prize we’ve been reaching for. Peter is writing to a group of believers who have suffered for their faith, and he’s encouraging them that soon this will all be over, and they’ll have the reward that awaits those who live by faith in Jesus. Until then, Peter said it’s important that we remain:

- **Alert:** Specifically, we shouldn’t be driven by our emotions, overwhelmed by what life throws at us, but instead we should have a clear, alert view of the things going on around us with the eternal in mind.
- **Sober-minded for prayer:** Instead of being controlled by the values, thoughts, and ways of the world, we should focus on Christ, living prayerfully in dependence upon Him until His return.
- **When are you tempted to think in ways that are more in line with the world than with the Bible?**
- **How does it make you feel to know the end is near?**

## Day Two

# 1 PETER 4:8



When Jesus was asked about the most important commandments, He taught that we should love God with all that we are and we should love others in the same ways we love ourselves (Matt. 22:36-40). Here, Peter emphasizes this same principle. Above all other things, we should love others, particularly our Christian brothers and sisters. “Constant” refers to the kind of love that stretches us. It’s often easy for us to love our friends—those who love us—in ways that are comfortable. We should certainly do this, but this isn’t exactly what Peter is talking about. He’s calling us to the kind of love that is willing to make major sacrifices, so others would experience the blessings of God. Specifically, he’s teaching that the love that characterizes the church is that which is willing to overlook and forgive others who sin against us in order to display the grace of Jesus.

➤ **How do you love others in ways that stretch you?**

➤ **What does it mean that love covers sins?**

## Day Three

# 1 PETER 4:9

In our culture, we often have a narrow definition of love—feelings of affection (often with an emphasis on romantic feelings) for another person. Though it is true that love is a feeling, it certainly isn’t only this. The love that characterizes the Christian life isn’t just emotional, but is also highly practical. Hospitality refers specifically to showing kindness to strangers. Peter was writing to Christians who, because of intense persecution, had been scattered throughout the ancient world. They had been driven out of their homes! As they fled, Peter reminded the church of their responsibility to welcome as guests those who would otherwise have no place to stay. In our culture, we value our privacy and independence, and we may see this kind of arrangement as an inconvenience or even as a great burden. But genuine love would never complain about demonstrating this kind of sacrificial love. To reflect Christ in this way may require sacrifice, but the privilege far outweighs the cost.

➤ **Who would characterize as highly hospitable? Why?**

➤ **How is God calling you to be more hospitable?**

## Day Four

# 1 PETER 4:10

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The Bible teaches that every believer receives a spiritual gift that is to be used for serving the church after coming to the faith in Jesus (1 Cor. 12:7). God is the one who entrusts to each believer the spiritual gift He desires they would use in building up the church. Some gifts place people in the position that they would be in the background, like serving or administration. Other gifts, such as teaching or leadership, put people in front of others and where they would receive attention. Whatever the case, the gifts should never be used to draw attention to ourselves, but to serve the needs of others, pointing them to Jesus. After all, the gifts don't belong to us. We are simply stewards of the gifts that belong to God and that He has entrusted to us to be used in building the church.

➤ **How would you describe your spiritual giftedness? If you're not sure, ask a leader to help you find out.**

➤ **How will you commit to using your gift to serve others in practical ways?**

## Day Five

# 1 PETER 4:11

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Peter is now describing two categories of gifts: speaking gifts and serving gifts. For those who teach, we need to make sure our words aren't based on human thoughts, but on the truth God has revealed in the Scriptures. The Bible contains the words of life, but to teach anything else would lead people astray. Regarding those who serve, we need to see that it is not by our own strength, else we may be tempted to boast in our accomplishments. Instead, when we realize we serve in the strength of God, we will be quick to direct the credit to Him. The purpose of our gifts is to serve one another in real ways, and as God's grace is displayed in these expressions of love, God is glorified.

➤ **How do you speak in ways that help people understand the truth of the Bible?**

➤ **How do you serve in the strength of God? How do you direct the credit to Him?**