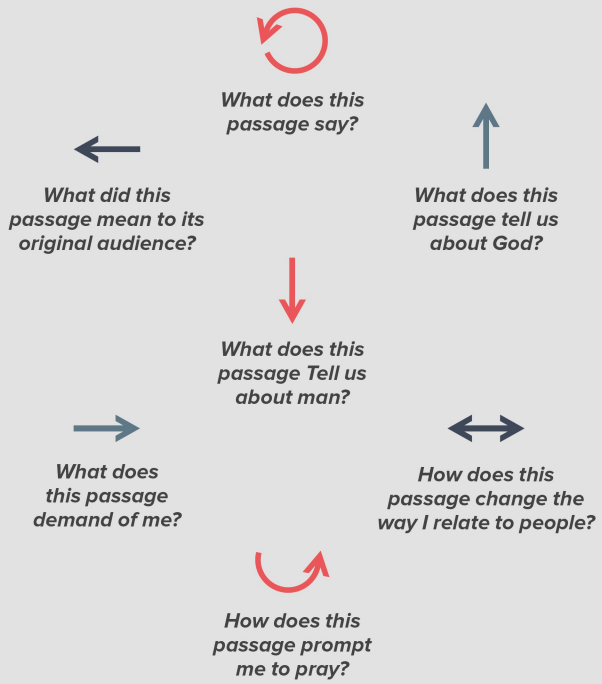
DAILY DEVOTIONS

The 7 Arrows of **Bible Reading**



Day One
ECCLESIASTES 12:13a

Ecclesiastes is a book that was written about the meaning of life. Solomon tried essentially all that life had to offer—seeking pleasure, entertainment, wine, possessions, knowledge, fulfillment in work, and more—and his goal was to find out what might give lasting satisfaction and fulfillment. Given that he was the richest man on earth and worth an estimated $2 trillion, Solomon could do anything or have anything he wanted. Literally! So he tried it all, and after a lifetime of seeking to understand life's meaning, Solomon wrote down his perspectives. When he says, "When all has been heard," he's referring to his consideration of all the things he'd experienced. And Solomon came to some very clear conclusions about the purpose and meaning of life.

What things have you tried as a way to bring happiness and satisfaction?

What conclusions have you made so far?

Day Two
ECCLESIASTES 12:13b

After he'd tried finding satisfaction in everything life had to offer, Solomon summed up his conclusions in this: Fear God and keep his commands. Many times, when we consider the idea of fearing God, we may be inclined to think of giving God reverence and respect. This certainly applies, but it doesn't begin to cover what Solomon is talking about. Here's the truth. No matter what we may experience during our time on earth, all people die. More importantly, we will all stand before God in judgment, and to know we will be judged according to the ways we've lived on earth (including our thoughts, desires, and motives) should provoke a healthy level of fear. In light of this, we should obey God in everything.

In what ways do you "fear" God?

Why is it so important to obey God in all things?

Day Three
ECCLESIASTES 12:13c

To fear God and obey His commands is certainly for all people. But this isn't all this verse means. Another way to say it is "this is the whole of humanity" or "this is the whole reason for our existence." When God created us in His image, it was so we would reflect His nature and character to the world. He gave the law to His people to help them know Him and to help them know how to live in order to reflect Him. Obeying the law is the way to fulfill our purpose of reflecting God, and the inverse is also true. Failure to obey the law is to fail to fulfill our purpose. If we want to experience the purpose and meaning God has for us—which is the only true meaning—we must obey God. This applies to all people.

How have you sought happiness, fulfillment, and meaning?

How does God's law help us to experience our true purpose?

Day Four
ECCLESIASTES 12:14a

In our lives, we will do things we're not necessarily proud of. We will use our words in ways that hurt others. We will behave in ways that cause conflict, embarrass our families or ourselves, or that cause injury, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We may not always pay close attention to the ways we "act," as this verse says. However, we need to be completely aware that God is aware of every action, every word, every work, and one day we will be required to give an account of every one. There may be times when we know we've done wrong, and we think we've gotten away with it. However, this is never the way it works. The truth is that God will bring every act to judgment. For the good we've done, God stands ready to offer reward. And for the wrongs we've committed, God requires a price that Jesus has already paid.

- **How does it make you feel to know God will judge every act?**

- **Why does God judge our actions?**

Day Five
ECCLESIASTES 12:14b

Not only does God judge our actions that are outwardly visible, including our words. He also judges the things that aren't seen—our thoughts, desires, and motives. In one sense, people can know the things that are inside our hearts by listening to the ways we speak and observing the ways we live, as the things we express always flow from our internal condition. However, in another sense, we can't even fully know ourselves, and as Jeremiah asks, "The heart is more deceitful than anything else, and incurable—who can understand it?" (Jer. 17:9). The answer: God understands the details about even the secret things in our hearts. And He will judge us according to all of it. So let's be sure to work on aligning not only the ways we live, but also our hearts, to God's standards.

- **What does the way you live say about your desires?**

- **How can you make sure to align your heart to God's standards?**