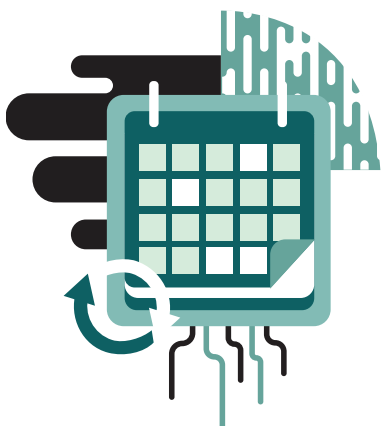


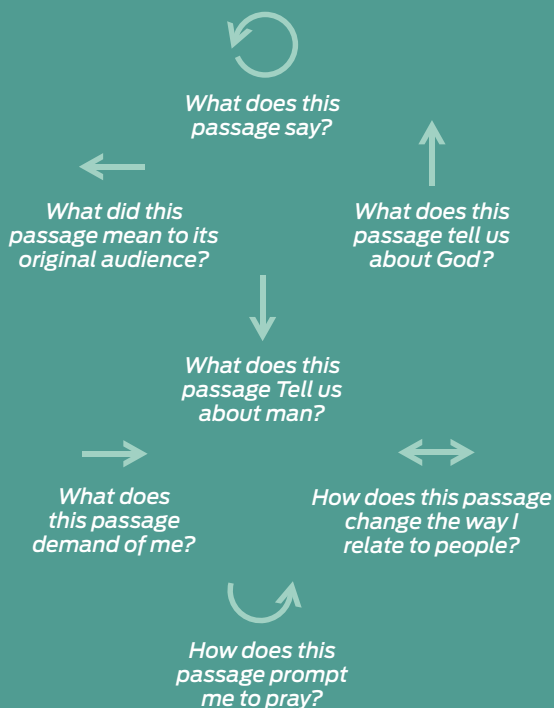
Daily Devotions



Day 1

Genesis 42:1-38

The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Joseph was a smart guy. We see this in how he managed Potiphar's house, the prison, and the distribution of grain in Egypt. More importantly, we see this in the way Joseph trusted God. We see this in how God blessed him and gave him wisdom in what he did. Surely, then, Joseph connected the dots of his life. Surely, he understood how God used each link in the chain of events of his life—even the painful ones—to bring him to his position of authority, beneath only Pharaoh.

And yet, when Joseph saw his brothers, it appears that his reaction—treating them like strangers and speaking harshly to them—was instinctive. It was his gut response—or more aptly his heart response—to seeing his brothers who had hurt him so deeply. Twenty years had passed, but the wound was deep and seeing them reopened it.

As we continue reading through Joseph's account, we will see God working on his heart, to bring it to the place his mind surely was. This is the beauty of God's work in us—He is after our complete, not partial, transformation by the power of the gospel.

What are some areas of your life—thoughts, emotions, or behaviors—where you recognize your need for the gospel to change you?

Genesis 43:1–44:34

Joseph's test was nearly complete. He had placed his older brothers in a position where he would see how they treated their younger, favored brother Benjamin. Joseph already could have noticed a hint at what they would do: They had all returned with Benjamin to the city after Joseph's cup was found in his sack.

Then Judah, speaking on behalf of the brothers, went a step farther. They would all stay in Egypt as Joseph's slaves. They would not abandon their father's favorite son this time.

But then, when Joseph refused this offer, Judah went one more step farther. Judah, the one who had played such a significant role in betraying Joseph before—the one who had suggested selling him as a slave—stepped forward as an intercessor. He would take the place of his brother. He would offer his life as a slave instead of Benjamin.

This sacrificial action by Judah was Joseph's breaking point. He could no longer keep his test going. Any lingering resentment within him was crushed. It was time to reconcile with his brothers. This is the power of a selfless mediator. This is the power of Christ. This is the power of the gospel.

What ways has God positioned you to live sacrificially for someone else?

Genesis 45:1-28

It's important to pay attention to the reason Joseph gave his brothers for not being grieved or angry with themselves—the basis of the forgiveness he extended toward them. It was not because of the changes he saw in their behavior. Yes, Joseph was testing them to discern if they had changed, but the forgiveness he extended to them was based on something else. It was based on his understanding of what God had done (vv. 5-8). Joseph was able to see his situation from God's perspective, to realize God was the One who was at work behind the sins of his brothers. That is why he forgave, and why we should forgive as well.

Our forgiveness can sometimes look more like the world's (conditional) forgiveness than God's. We might be willing to forgive if the person who wronged us is contrite or at least apologizes. Sometimes, we want them to make restitution as well; and then we will forgive. But God calls on us to forgive in light of the gospel—in light of the forgiveness we have received in Christ.

Do you need to extend forgiveness to someone? What step will you take to do that?

Genesis

46:1–47:31

Can you imagine what it must have been like for Jacob as he traveled from his home to Egypt where his beloved son, the son he thought was dead, awaited him? The excitement? The nervousness? The agony of each mile passing by too slowly?

As they drew close, Jacob sent Judah ahead to prepare for their arrival in Goshen. In this simple act, we see a beautiful picture of grace. Judah, the son who had played such a significant role in tearing the two apart was given the opportunity to play a role in bringing them back together. Judah was no longer the agent of their separation, he became the facilitator of their reunion.

We don't know why Jacob chose Judah for this task. He may have consciously given this to his son as a gift of grace. Or it may have been for another reason. But what we do know is that this is what God affords us, in Christ. We too were once estranged from God our Father, in open rebellion against Him and His Son. Yet, in Christ, we have been given the privilege of declaring the gospel to the nations—to be used by God, because of His grace, to play a role in seeing people reconciled to God.

Who do you know who you can share the gospel with this week?

Genesis

48:1–50:26

In the closing verses of Genesis 50, we read of Joseph living more than fifty years after his father's death. God gave Joseph a long life of 110 years—long enough to see multiple generations of his descendants. But then, when he was about to die, he called his brothers together and he told them something prophetic. God was going to come to their aid and bring them from this land back to their homeland. Then he made them promise to take his bones with them.

This postscript links ahead to the Book of Exodus. But it serves much more than that, it reminds us of the central truth of Joseph's life: God's sovereignty over all. Joseph knew God had worked providentially in his life, and he knew God was not done. God would continue working His plan to redeem His people—from Egypt, yes, but in an even greater way in Christ—as had been promised so long before to their ancestor Abraham and to Adam and Eve before that.

In what ways do you need to trust in God's sovereignty in the days ahead?