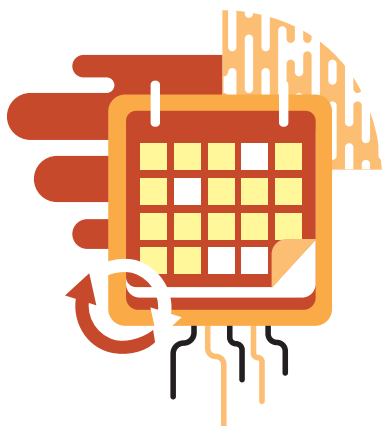


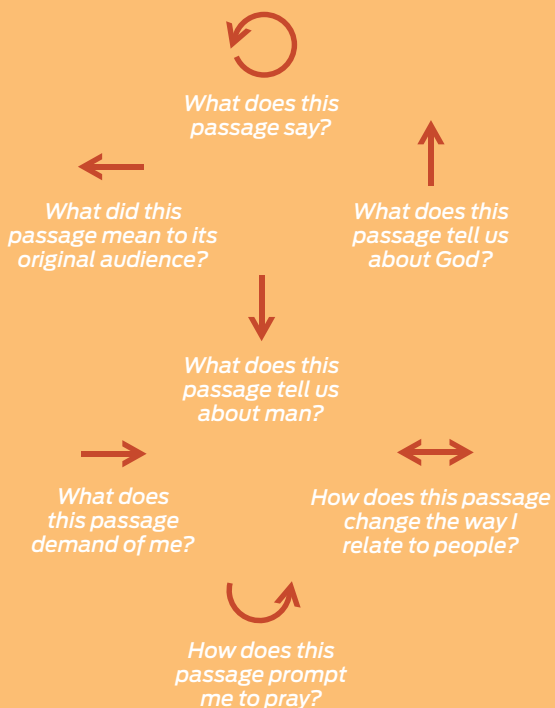
Daily Devotions



Day 1

1 Kings 11:1-8

The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



God had prohibited the Israelites from intermarrying with the nations surrounding them (Deut. 7:1-4). However, this was to preserve religious, not racial, purity as is made clear by the second half of verse 2. Solomon is an extreme example that proves the rule. With seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, his heart was literally turned in a thousand different directions.

Notice that the heart is mentioned four times in these first four verses. The writer of 1 Kings wanted to make sure we understand that Solomon suffered from a terminal heart condition: the divided heart.

Sin doesn't happen because of something external, something happening out there. It's internal, the result of something that has already happened inside. If your heart has been divided, Scripture provides the remedy for uniting it again (Ps. 86:11). Only God can bring together a divided heart.

Have you allowed your heart to become divided over time? Ask God to bring it back together again.

1 Kings

11:9-43

At the start of any large, organized marathon, thousands of people are lined up. There is energy, excitement, enthusiasm. There are costumes. It isn't uncommon to see people planning to run 26.2 miles dressed as Elvis.

That's the starting line. The finish line looks quite different. There are a lot fewer people. Far fewer costumes. And while some finish well, many more barely finish, stumbling, walking, or even crawling across that line on the pavement. But whether they sprint or crawl across and no matter what the time reads, everyone who crosses the finish line has one thing in common: they all finished. Many who start never do. The point isn't how you start; it's how you finish.

The first eleven chapters of 1 Kings detail Solomon's life and accomplishments. No king in Israel's history built more, taught more, spent more, wrote more, or married more. But for all that, his death is summed up with his burial with his fathers in the city of David. He started well—with the best of them—but he didn't finish well. May we be a people who finish strong.

What adjustments do you need to make in your race to finish well?

1 Kings

12:1-11

Rehoboam had two choices: listen to the old men who had counseled his father or listen to the young men he had grown up with. You know the rest of the story, and you know it didn't turn out well. It can be tempting to discount the previous generation and assume their ideas and perspectives are outdated. But consider these truths from God's word:

- One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts (Ps. 145:4).
- Wisdom is with the aged, and understanding in length of days (Job 12:12).
- Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old (Prov. 23:22).

Not only does it benefit us to seek wisdom from the previous generation; we ignore it at our own peril. If only he had listened! What will it take for us to listen?

From whom do you seek advice and counsel? Who do you need to seek out for advice in the future?

1 Kings

12:12-19

Verse 18 has a double meaning. On one level, “to this day” refers to the writing of 1 Kings itself, which could have been any time prior to the destruction of the temple (based on 1 Kings 8:8—that the poles to carry the ark could still be seen “to this day”). But the statement can be seen as a commentary on the future state of Israel. It was Israel who rejected Jesus (Acts 4:11). Paul would write in Romans 9:31-32 that Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness through works and not by faith. Any time we seek to be justified apart from grace, we are in rebellion against Jesus, the house of David. It continues to happen, to this day.

How are you seeking to be justified? Spiritually speaking, are you in rebellion against the house of David?

1 Kings

12:20-33

Two factors contributed to Israel’s apostasy. First, Jeroboam attempted to use religion in the service of politics. He reasoned that if people were required to return to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices, they wouldn’t identify with Shechem as their new capital. Jeroboam missed the point of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. It wasn’t to align the people with an earthly kingdom but with a heavenly one.

Second, Jeroboam appealed to his people’s desire for comfort and convenience. Instead of requiring them to visit only one place to offer sacrifices, he established two shrines—one at Dan, on the northern border of Israel, and the second at Bethel, on the southern border. He placed a golden calf in each one, repeating the same words Aaron used when he made the first golden calf at the foot of Mount Sinai (Ex. 32:4).

The problem with Jeroboam was that he saw the worship of God as a means to some other end. To him, worship of God was a means by which he could realize the end of a united people under his rule. Put simply, he made worship—and the God of that worship—a tool to bring about his purposes. Worship is never a means to an end. Worship is the end. May we remember that.

What do you need to do this week to make sure you are worshiping God with a pure heart?