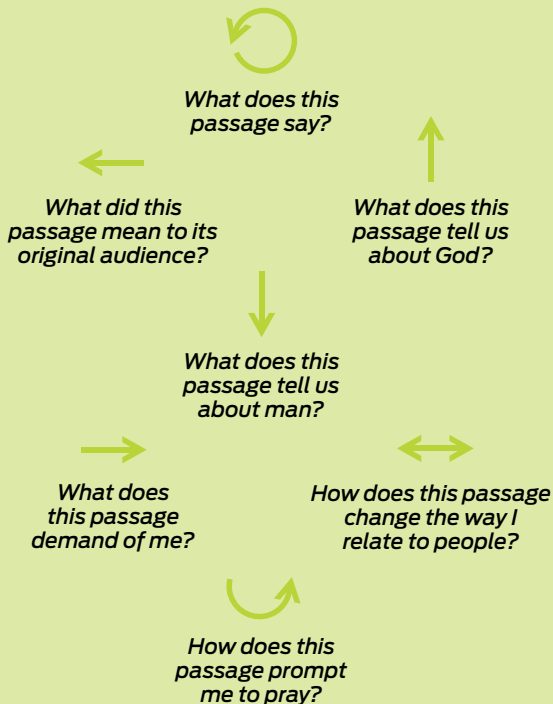


# Daily Devotions



## The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Day 1

## Judges 4:1-7

Judges 4:1-7 talks about Israel *again* doing what was evil in God's eyes. Does that word haunt you? It should. Like an accusing finger, the word "again" forces us to look deep within ourselves and ask God to uncover the areas where we fall short...again. Areas we are refusing to hand over to God and are instead pursuing our own pleasure and glory or are trying to find victory in our own power...again.

These agains are never in God's plan. The agains of sin remind us that we are not letting the power of God, through the Holy Spirit, live fully in us. It's not that we're not trying hard enough; in fact, it may be that we're trying too hard in our own power (Eph. 6:10).

God has promised His presence and His power. Even when we suffer for our agains, He has already made plans for our triumph and His glory. And He is right there pouring out His mercy, grace, love and forgiveness over us... again.

**What are the "again" sins in your life?  
How can you surrender that area of  
your life to God's control?**

# Judges 4:8-23

Jael's story is one of proving one's allegiance. Her husband Heber had chosen to leave his people, the Kenites, and live among King Jabin of Canaan, who opposed God and His people. And though Scripture does not tell us what Jael thought of God and God's people, her actions do.

We can only imagine Jabin, wild-eyed and panicked, fleeing the battle, as he sought safety in the tent of his friend Heber. Jael, innocent and hospitable, invites him in. And then drives a tent peg through his temple, proving the Bible is not for the feint of heart.

Many times, as Christians, we talk about what we believe. We are quick to read books, attend church gatherings, and say we're praying. But do our actions point to the life-changing power of the gospel? Does our daily living reveal our faith?

So the question becomes: How much like Jael are we? Are our actions proving our allegiance to Christ? Are we loving the left-out, helping the hopeless, and comforting the crushed? Or are our actions betraying our claims to be followers of Christ?

**Where is God calling you to take a stand for Him? What in your life is demonstrating your faith?**

# Judges 5:1-11

Over time, we tend to exaggerate what was good in the past as we simultaneously forget its pains and problems. The "good ole days" are often tinted by the rose-colored glasses of nostalgia that we choose to wear.

But sometimes we are wise to look back objectively and say, "Look where we've come from! Look at how hard things were—how much we messed things up—and yet how kind God has been to bring us to where we are today." Because in doing so, we are more able to see God's grace in our lives.

Deborah's song vividly recalls the hardest times in Judges 5:6-8: deserted main roads and villages, travelers afraid to be seen. War followed. Surely all the Israelites remembered the strain and trials.

We can do the same. When the past comes to mind and the pain comes with it, we can praise God for the fact that we're not there anymore. How did He give comfort and peace? Who did He provide to walk through those times together? How can we praise Him today for yesterday's troubles? Or if we are still in that season, we can praise God that He has not abandoned us along the way.

**How can you see God's hand in your past, even in the most difficult times? How can you rejoice in Him for that today?**

## Judges 5:12-23

The Israelites were singing a song about Barak in Judges 5:12-23.

Barak, the leader of the Israelite army whose fears were real. The military man who refused to go into battle alone and demanded that Deborah go with him. In the midst of all his faults, the song remembers the victory: his prisoners (v. 12) and his leadership (v. 15) made it in the annals of history.

The grace and favor we find in Barak's story reminds us that we can cut others—and ourselves—a little slack for our moments of fear. Despite his shortcomings, Barak believed with the little faith he could muster, and God used it to bring victory over one of the most feared armies of the day.

We're rarely going to get it all right, but the faith of a mustard seed is all we need to see God triumph. He will lead and He will provide; we just need to believe. The victory depends on Him, not us.

**Where do you need to show mercy to yourself and others?**

## Judges 5:24-31

Verse 24 says that Jael is the most blessed among women. But before her encounter with Sisera, we knew nothing of this woman. We don't know about her history, or her passions, or her children, or her gifts.

But we do know she was familiar with wielding a hammer and a peg. This was fitting for a Kenite, a nomadic tribe in the promised land. Jael had likely helped her husband set up tents many times before. She may have set up tents by herself, and each time she did, she surely never imagined that God would one day use such a mundane task to bring Him glory and secure victory for the Israelites.

God can use every tool in your toolbox: shiny and impressive, dull and worn, boring and common. Our job is to learn to use them and offer them all to Him for His glory.

**What tools and skills can God use for His glory? Are you offering them to Him?**