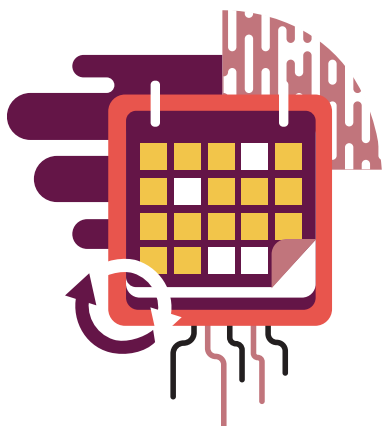


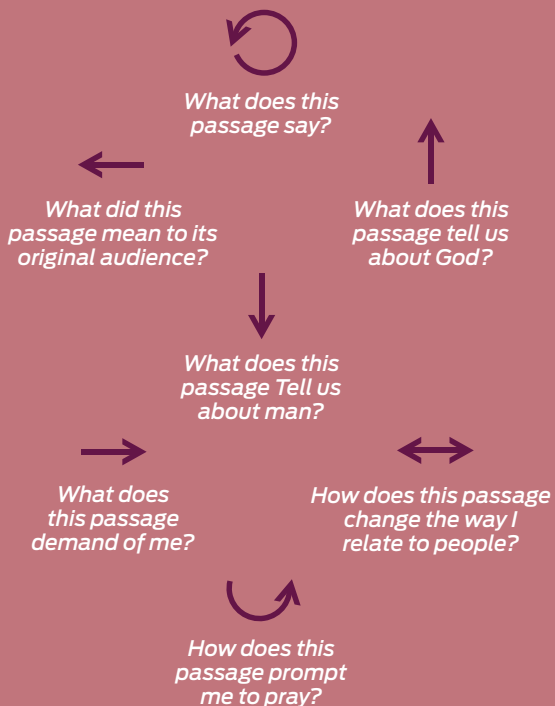
Daily Devotions



Day 1

2 Chronicles 29:1-36

The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Hezekiah seems like the kind of person people were drawn to, a magnet for the people of Israel. Although his father, Ahaz, didn't do what was right in the eyes of the Lord, Hezekiah did. In the first month of his first year, he swung open the doors of the temple and decided to restore it.

Hezekiah employed and encouraged the people, as any good leader does, and spoke of the covenant he longed to make with God on their behalf (2 Chron. 29:10-11). In a mere sixteen days, the Levites cleansed and consecrated the temple and walked into the newly renovated building, where they slaughtered animals to make atonement for all of Judah.

Hezekiah may have had a blueprint for restoring the temple, but he had no clue how his restoration pointed to a far greater temple—Jesus. Under the new covenant inaugurated with Jesus' blood, God doesn't dwell in a building—He dwells in His people. Since this is our wondrous reality, we must take measures as Hezekiah did to swing open our lives and make reforms. This looks like confession, and we can go directly to the source and ask that He cleanse us, and He is faithful to do so every time (Heb. 4:16; 1 John 1:9).

What do you need to confess today?

2 Chronicles 34:1-7

We live in a postmodern culture. A quick summary of “postmodern” versus “modern” is that our society values feelings over facts. This leads people to the terrifying conclusion of rejecting absolute truth because it doesn’t sit right with them.

Christians know that sin is real (Rom. 3:23). Because our culture believes everyone is innately good, sin isn’t a term we use frequently. Instead, we talk about our feelings and how we are “struggling” with something rather than the fact that we have a sin we must confess. If we aren’t vigilant, this line of thinking can slip into our churches. Perhaps it already has.

Between Hezekiah’s reign to Josiah’s, there were only two bad kings, Manasseh and Amon. Sin crept in, and the good work Hezekiah had done on the temple and to purify the land was destroyed. So Josiah traveled throughout the land to tear down altars, remove false gods, and destroy the wickedness.

Sin can easily creep in and pollute us both individually and corporately if we aren’t constantly returning to God.

How can you as an individual keep sin from creeping in?

2 Chronicles 34:8-13

Josiah clearly recognized his call in filling his sphere of influence with the truth of God, but it went beyond that. He called others into the adventure: the Levites, doorkeepers, carpenters, and builders. He allowed others to realize their dynamic role in God’s kingdom (1 Cor. 12).

This hasn’t changed. Every believer has been placed in his or her church, neighborhood, and community to influence it with the love of God.

How are you loving and serving alongside the body of Christ for its growth? How are you pursuing the Great Commission as a part of your church body?

2 Chronicles 34:14-33

Like finding hidden treasure, the Book of the Law was discovered. Oddly enough, the high priest, Hilkiah, didn't stumble and trip over himself racing to get the book to King Josiah; instead, he handed this gold mine to Shaphan, who eventually told King Josiah about the book. Talk about a delayed climax to finding an incredibly pertinent piece of information!

The book was read to King Josiah. He tore his clothes as he realized not only had he sinned in the eyes of God but so had all of his people. His reaction, though, is fitting only if God is real and holy.

What we begin to realize in 2 Chronicles is that repentance does not necessarily suspend the earthly consequences of personal and corporate sin. The kingdom of Judah would eventually be destroyed, and the people would be exiled to Babylon even though Josiah had turned his face to God.

We must never see God's grace as cheap. Instead, it's a call for us to come and die to ourselves. Even then, often there will be earthly consequences for our sinful choices, rippling out and affecting the multitudes. So let us be wise, loving, and obedient.

What is a specific example in your life of sin having earthly consequences? How were these circumstances reconciled by grace?

2 Chronicles 35:1-27

When one dives deeply into the holiness of God, repents, and is made new, celebration is in order. Not just one day, but day after day we get out the confetti because our lives have been ransomed by one life, that of Jesus Christ. Because Josiah understood the gift he had been given, he celebrated the Passover.

There is a pattern in Josiah's life that must be noted. He tore his robes upon hearing God's word. He repented profusely over his people's disobedience. But then he rose to his feet, gathered the people, and celebrated profoundly.

Such is the pattern for the believer. It should never be rushed and never be forced. Rather, when our eyes are unveiled to our wickedness and when we drink deeply of a grace that stretches as far as the east is from the west, our bodies can't help but stand up straighter and our lips can't help but have an upward turn. Praise the Lord!

Are you known more as a person who is sad or joyful? How can you more fully cultivate in your life the pattern of mourning that turns into joy?