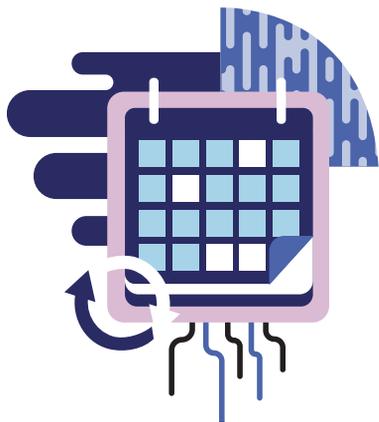


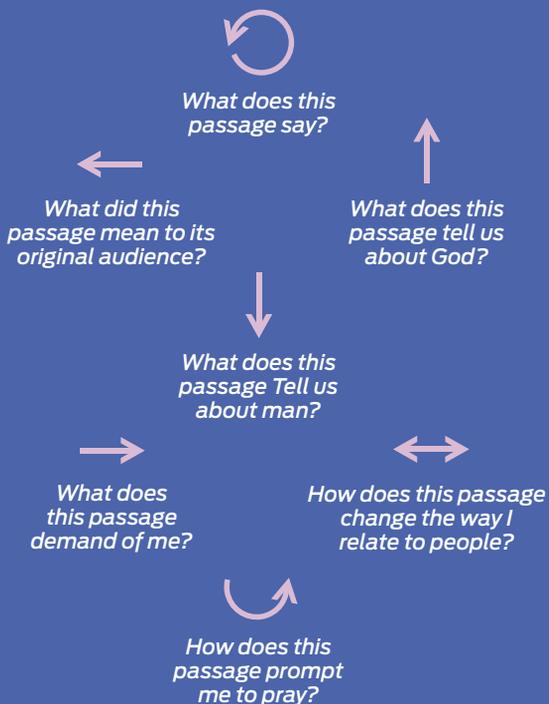
Daily Devotions



Day 1

Psalm 40

The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



This psalm is a statement of the faithfulness of God and an invitation to respond to His faithfulness with patient waiting, even in tough circumstances. But waiting patiently is not waiting idly—David was seeking God, and God responded (v. 1). God’s response wasn’t immediate, given that David had to wait. Neither was the delay the result of God ignoring David. David knew who God is and trusted His care for him (v. 17). He declared that his waiting patiently was not a testament to his personal strength but confidence in his trustworthy God.

Patience is a gift no one seems to want but God is eager to give. Patience is rooted in the reality and grows in the faith that while we are limited, God is not. Therefore, we must acknowledge our limitations by adopting a posture and ethic of not forcing what we desperately want but trusting God to provide what we absolutely need. God is wise and merciful; His holy character and ability are worthy of our faith and patience.

How is God’s past faithfulness cultivating present patience in your life?

Esther

1:1-3:15

God’s powerful and guiding hand and activity in the affairs of all history can be unsettling at times. This feeling of angst may come from wrestling with whether or not God’s guiding hand is good all the time in all situations. The story of Esther is a powerful reminder that God is faithful for His glory and our good. God was setting up the work of redemption for the Jews before the need of rescue was even realized. God was orchestrating experiences of good before the encounters with evil took place. His hand was good before and even in environments of evil. What would have been seen as random blessings in real time are seen clearly from the perspective of hindsight as the very things God would use to accomplish His saving work.

This reality invites us to cultivate confidence in knowing God is working for our good in ways we can’t yet see or understand. Furthermore, we should be motivated to deepen present faithfulness because in doing so we honor God in the here and now.

How can you focus on the goodness of God and cultivate present faithfulness in light of His sovereignty?

Esther

4:1-6:14

Thus far, Esther’s identity as a Jew had remained hidden at the command of Mordecai (2:10). Concealing her identity had cost her nothing in the presence of the king, but revealing it, as Mordecai later requested, could cost her life. Certainly she could’ve gone as just Esther, but there was something powerful and personal about going before the king not just as Esther the Queen but as Hadassah the Jew. There’s a power associated with personalized intercession. In fact, intercession involves a willingness to identify with others. Esther chose to share in the fate of the Jews—“Spare us,” she pleaded, not just, “Spare them.” Whenever God calls someone to go on behalf of another, it’s not in a detached theoretical way devoid of intimacy or risk; rather, it involves authentic relational identification. We see this with Jesus in His identification through incarnation. With us it must be no different as we intercede for the lost.

How can you better identify with the people on whose behalf you are interceding?

Esther

7:1–10:3

Haman's evil plan was about to be unleashed, which would result in the Jews being wiped off the face of the earth. God's people were on the proverbial ropes, teetering on the precipice of extinction. But God was not unaware of His people's plight. All the while, God had been providentially working to position Joseph, the son who was believed to be dead, in a position of influence to intercede for his family and spare them from death. In the same way, although He is not mentioned directly in the Book of Esther, God was at work once more. God was aware of Haman's edict, and He worked providentially to place Mordecai and Esther in positions of influence to intercede for their people and spare them from death.

Neither Pharaoh in Egypt nor Haman in Persia would stop God's plan; indeed, neither could. God's sovereign work is unstoppable. He would provide His Son, Jesus, to make intercession for people through His death and resurrection so we might find eternal life.

In what ways might God be positioning you to intercede for others through prayer and sharing the gospel?

Isaiah

26

Waiting is an exercise and expression of dependence because your actions are tied to those of another. That dynamic often produces an experience of frustration and anxiety in the heart. Yet Isaiah 26:3–4 says there's a different experience available for people who are dependent on the Lord—a promise of peace. God's peace is perfect, providing everything necessary for continued focus as we live with and for Him. This peace doesn't come from the absence of anxiety but from an active pursuit of God. God's peace is granted to those with an active and intentional resolve to depend on Him, not those with a passive circumstantial resignation. God's immutability—He is unchanging, unwavering, an everlasting rock—provides a solid foundation for us to rest on. This promise of God's peace is available to all who desire it and who come to Him in faith, namely, to those who have come to God through faith in Jesus Christ (Phil. 4:7).

In what situations do you actively need to place faith in the person of Jesus to experience God's perfect peace?