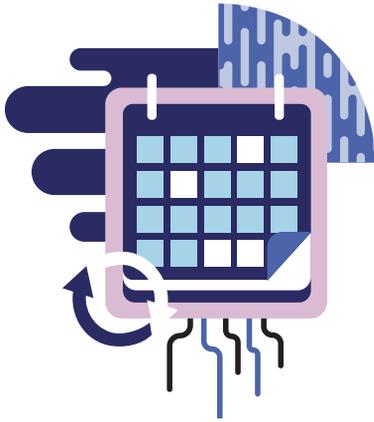


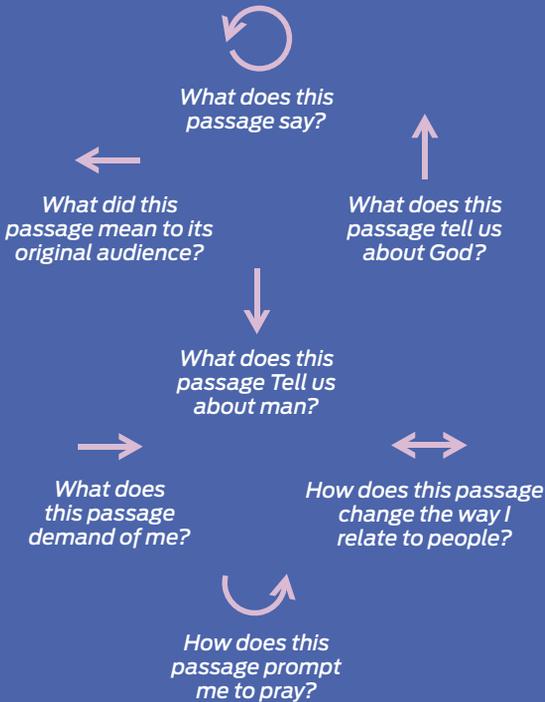
# Daily Devotions



Day 1

## Malachi 1:1-14

### The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Ever since the days of Adam, we as human beings have been finding ways to find fault with God so we can feel justified in going our own way. Sometimes our departure is physical. The Israelites often turned to idols, forsaking the Lord. People today may leave the church altogether. Other times, our departure is emotional, often characterized by people just going through the motions.

For instance, even though the people were full of familiarity with the grace of God in making promises to Abraham, in rescuing them from slavery in Egypt, in establishing them as a people and nation in the promised land, in forgiving them over and over and over again, and in restoring them from their exile back to the promised land, they still found fault with God. Their sin-tainted perceptions of God's care led them to halfhearted worship.

Their indictments and questioning of our good God should cause us to examine the view we have of God in our own hearts. Yet no matter how many factors may contribute to a lessened view of God, one factor is definitive in fighting these sinful tendencies—an accurate picture of Jesus, the Son whom God sent for our salvation.

**How does God's love in Jesus help us to see God rightly?**

# Malachi

## 2:1-17

Faithfulness among the people of God stems from the fear of God, a recognition that God is both tender and terrifying. He is holy, just, merciful, patient, wise, sovereign, and loving. Being that these attributes reflect His being, He is worthy of our worship and our obedience—worthy of our faithfulness. Yet the priests and people of restored Israel in Malachi’s day chose paths of unfaithfulness because there was no fear of God in them.

For the priests, their forefathers in the tribe of Levi received a covenant from God for their faithfulness, namely, the faithful acts of Phinehas for the Lord’s honor and glory (Num. 25:1-13). They feared the Lord and acted on His behalf for the blessing of the nation. They honored God and taught His truth. But now they turned from the Lord and contented themselves with His curses as they led others astray. Woe to those who cause others to stumble (Luke 17:1-2).

**What are some circumstances that challenge your faithfulness to the Lord, and how does the gospel help steer your heart for God’s honor?**

# Malachi

## 3:1-12

Every day we wake up, a war of faith rages in our hearts. It takes many shapes and forms, but this war is centered on the trustworthiness of God. Our sinful hearts wonder, “Can God be trusted, and if so, how much and for how long?” One arena of battle in this war is the area of finances.

The fickle approach we take to God’s commands concerning how we view and manage our resources is due to our sinful hearts. God clearly, compassionately, regularly, and authoritatively invites us to a generous life anchored in His generosity. God, through Malachi, tied the Israelites’ lack of experiencing and expressing generosity to their misconception of God; in their minds, He wasn’t powerful or generous enough—they didn’t fear Him (v. 5). If we don’t trust the Lord to take care of us, then we won’t be free to honor Him with our finances as He calls us to use them.

**How has the generosity of God emboldened you to pray and freed you to give?**

# Malachi

## 3:13-18

Foolishness rears its ugly head in our lives when we misunderstand the nature of God and His actions, and foolishness defiles a person before God like every other sin.

To speak harshly about God is foolishness, as is pleading ignorance of having done so. He is the Creator, Sustainer, and Provider for all that exists. Who has the right to speak back to Him? No one (Job 42:1-6; Rom. 9:20-21).

To consider obedience to the Lord as useless is foolishness. He rewards those who seek Him in faith (Heb. 11:6). Those who fear the Lord and honor Him will receive His compassion and blessing.

To be envious of the arrogant and the wicked is foolishness. God is holy and just; He will punish those who reject and defy Him. His justice often does not come when we want or expect it, but it will come. His patience is a time for sinners to repent and believe in His Son, for this is wisdom (2 Pet. 3:8-13).

**What are some ways you will serve the Lord in faith because of who He is and what He has done and will do?**

# Malachi

## 4:1-6

There is coming a day when eternal destinies and consequences will be sealed. The sun rising on that day will either rise to consume or rise to heal. The difference will lie in how people have chosen to respond to the Lord of Armies, the great Creator and Savior God.

Those who reject His commands, refuse to honor Him, and run along their own paths will find the Day of the Lord to be a day of ruin. The imagery here is stark, and we cannot help but connect the fire on this day to the fiery descriptions of hell and final judgment (Matt. 25:41; 2 Thess. 1:4-10).

Those who fear the Lord, however, have nothing to fear from this coming day. It will be marked by full restoration and joy. To fear the Lord is to know Him, and to know Him is to obey Him. And the obedience He requires is to obey the gospel, to believe that Jesus Christ was sent for our salvation and to love as we have been loved (2 Thess. 1:8; 1 John 3:23).

**How will you love others with the love God has shown you in Jesus Christ?**