

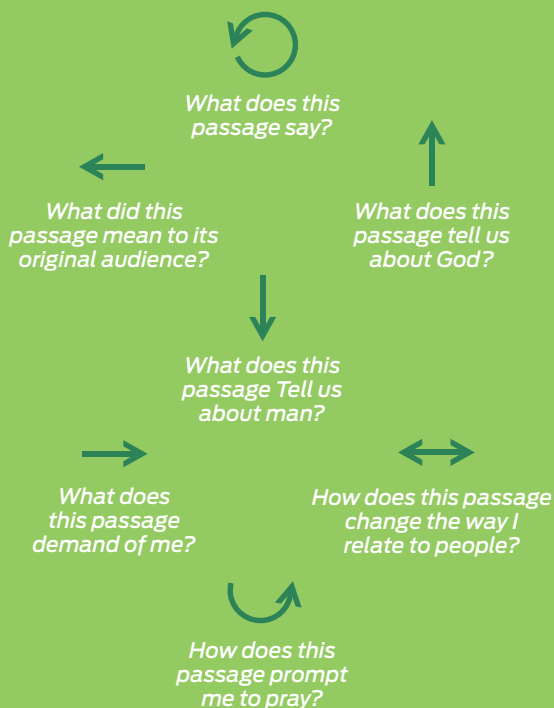
Daily Devotions



Day 1

Luke 1:5-24

The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



God the Holy Spirit indwells every person who believes in Christ from the moment he or she believes. The Spirit now continually dwells within us as our Helper and Guide, Comforter and Keeper. Though we can never lose Him, we can stuff Him down. Our sin and disobedience hinders the work and power of God within us. However, when we pray, read God's Word, sing in worship, and follow His leading in obedience, we invite the Spirit to fill every part of us. It is through this same filling that we can be as bold and brave as John and live dedicated to proclaiming Jesus.

We should confess to God any way we might be grieving or stifling of the Spirit we might be doing (Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 5:19). Consider reaching out to a trusted friend and ask him to pray for you in this area of your life.

In what ways are you allowing the Holy Spirit to fill and influence every part of your life? In what ways are you holding Him back from certain areas of your life?

Day 2

Luke 1:57-66

God commanded Zechariah and Elizabeth to go against tradition and culture when He told them to name their miracle baby John. It's easy to imagine since they were newlyweds that they both had dreamt of their own little Zech Jr. The expectation from everyone at that naming celebration was that the boy would be named after his father.

Yet Zechariah and Elizabeth chose obedience over tradition. They decided to honor God's ways over cultural expectation. Remember, at this point Zechariah was still dumb and deaf at the Lord's hand. Instead of walking down the road of bitterness, the silent father chose the path of obedience.

Do you think you are characterized more as one who walks in the way of the world or the way of obedience? Spend some time in prayer, asking the Spirit to help you make choices of obedience today.

Day 3

Luke 1:67-75

Zechariah's prophecy was the first public form of prophecy to God's people in more than four hundred years. The same man who declared his doubt in God just months earlier was now being used by God to be His mouthpiece.

It's so easy to look back on our failures and assume that we've been disqualified from service to God. Interestingly, the very instrument Zechariah used to sin against God, his mouth, was the very tool God later used to bring glory to Himself. You might have seen God do the same in your own life or in the lives of others. There is no mistake so big that the power of God's forgiveness—obtained through Christ's sacrifice—cannot overcome.

What past failures are holding you back from serving God? How can you trust in the work of Christ to cover your guilt and redeem your past?

Luke 1:76-79

God fulfilled this prophecy through John. John the Baptizer played a powerful and significant role in the plans of God through his obedience. John understood the role he had to play, and he played it to the full. And at the height of his personal ministry, where the temptation must have been incredibly strong to bask in the praise of his followers, he declared, “He [Christ] must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30).

John did just that, right up to his death when he was beheaded for speaking truth (Matt. 14:1-12). May we be a people who seek to increase the name of Christ and follow Him in obedience to the furthest extent that He calls us to go, even if that means physical harm or bodily death.

What might it look like to “decrease” this week so that the presence and glory of Christ might increase in your life?

Luke 1:80

The waiting seasons of life are often the hardest to walk through. There are so many unknowns and uncertainties. When you are waiting on something significant and you have no idea when (or if) it will come to pass, the weight of waiting can be emotionally crippling.

John lived in the wilderness before God called him into the public ministry. He knew God’s will from a very early age, yet he had to wait before he could walk forward in that calling. We don’t know how John handled that wait, but it would have been excruciating for some people. But as God continues to give us opportunities to wait on His perfect provision and timing, we should strive to learn to wait well. God’s purpose is always good, His grace is always sufficient, and His plan is always on time whether things seem that way or not.

How do you tend to handle seasons of waiting? With doubt? With confidence? Pray and ask God to strengthen your view of Him and His perfect plan for your life.