



DAILY DEVOTIONS

THE 7 ARROWS OF BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What does this passage tell us about man?



What does this passage demand of me?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?

DAILY

EZRA 4:24-5:2

The proclamation of God's prophet helped Zerubbabel and the people get back to building the temple. It's not that the people no longer had their own homes and needs or that their enemies went away. The potential for distraction and discouragement was still there. The people simply had to make first things first: finishing the temple. God took care of the rest. When we give God our Spirit-empowered best, He takes care of the rest. (See also 2 Tim. 3:15-16)

HOW DOES GOD'S WORD GIVE US WHAT WE NEED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK HE HAS PLANNED FOR US?

WHAT KINDS OF THINGS SHOULD WE READ AND LISTEN TO IF WE WANT TO STAY FOCUSED ON GOD'S WILL?

Pray: Ask the Holy Spirit to show you any distractions in your life—even good things done at the wrong time—and help you stay focused on the right things.

DAY 02

EZRA 6:13-15

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO KNOW GOD STARTS AND FINISHES HIS WORK IN US?

WHAT IS OUR ROLE IN COOPERATING WITH GOD'S WORK IN OUR LIVES?

God provided for His people to complete His temple. We too are under construction. We are being transformed into Christ's image. God started the plan, God provides for the plan, God will finish the plan (see Phil. 1:6). It may sometimes feel impossible to become the Christ follower you were created to be. Using your own abilities by your own strength, it's impossible. With God's power and God's provision, His plan for you will come to pass.

Pray: Ask God to provide all you need to do His will. Thank Him that He will complete the good work He's begun in you.

DAY 03

EZRA 6:16-22

What God started in His people, He completed through His people. The exiles were home. The temple was finished. Everything needed to resume worship—priests, Levites, altars, sacrifices—was ready. God's people had completed His plan by His power. It was time to celebrate. When God does something good in our lives, we need to take time to rejoice in what He has done and get ready for what He will do next.

WHY WAS IT SO IMPORTANT TO GOD THAT TEMPLE WORSHIP WAS RESTORED AND RESUMED?

WHAT HAS GOD DONE IN YOUR LIFE OVER THE YEARS THAT YOU CAN REJOICE IN?

Pray: Thank God for some good things He has done in your life. Thank Him that He's not done working in your life. Ask to be filled with His joy for His plan.

DAY 18

EZRA 6:16-22

WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL WAYS JESUS GENERATES JOY IN OUR LIVES?

IN WHAT AREAS OF YOUR LIFE DO YOU NEED A FULLER MEASURE OF JOY?

Ezra 6:22 says, "The LORD had made them joyful." It doesn't say, "they made themselves joyful." It doesn't say they found joy in something or someone else. Jesus generates joy in our lives. The most joyful people often don't have the most, but serve Jesus the most. Jesus's joy is full. When we join Jesus in His work, His joy becomes the fullness of joy in us. We'll never find true joy except from the giver of joy: Jesus (see John 15:7-11).

Pray: If you've been looking for joy outside of the Lord, confess that aloud to Him. Declare that joy is a gift Jesus gives you. Ask for His joy as you seek to do His will today.

DAY 19

EZRA 6:14-15

Word: **fill**: produce life or death. What we listen to — who we listen to — matters (see Prov. 18:21). God's people were really discouraged and distracted from God's plan. His prophets cut through the distractions and encouraged them: "We're going to work with God to complete His plan. We need constant direction and encouragement. Filling our lives with God's Word and trusted teachers of God's Word will produce what we need for His plan."

IF GOD'S PROPHETS HELPED HIS PEOPLE OBEY HIS PLAN, WHAT KINDS OF VOICES SHOULD WE LISTEN TO?

WHAT VOICES SHOULD YOU LISTEN TO LESS OR MAYBE COMPLETELY REMOVE FROM YOUR LIFE?

Pray: Ask God's Holy Spirit to show you voices and messages that are not productions of man. Pray that you will listen to the right messages.