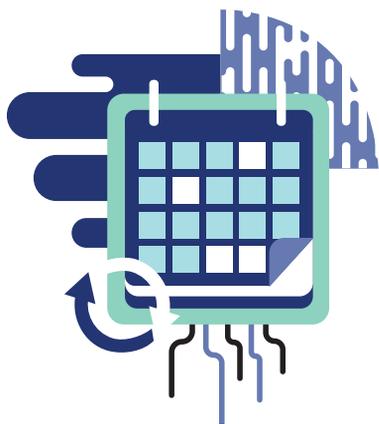


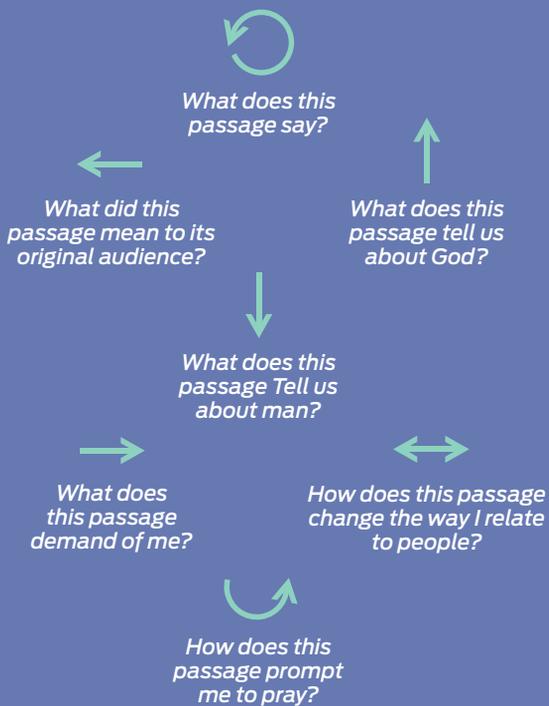
# Daily Devotions



Day 1

## Genesis 11:1-4

### The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



If you have ever attended or viewed a sporting event, then you have experienced humanity's hunger for unity. Tens of thousands of people who may have very little in common gather for a few hours around the common bond of sports. Before long, complete strangers stand and cheer together and high five each other in a powerful demonstration of our inner desire to connect with others.

This should not surprise Christians. We know God—in His Trinitarian nature—is relational. And He has created us in His image; we are wired for relationship with Him and others. The question is: Where will we seek the unity we crave?

The opening verses of the Babel account reveal how people often pursue unity in the wrong places—apart from God.

**What are some wrong places you have looked for unity?**

**What are some specific ways you can pursue God in unity with other Christians this week?**

# Genesis 11:5-7

It's difficult to stand at the base of the Burj Khalifa in Dubai (the tallest building in the world)—looking up toward its top reaching 2,717 feet into the sky—and not feel a sense of awe. Buildings like these testify to what humanity can achieve. And they also condemn us for how little we can achieve. All it takes is seeing a bird flying high above these structures to humble our thinking.

The structures we build are massive in our eyes, but they are tiny in God's. That is why He had to come down to see the tower in Babel. Our good works may earn others' respect, but they are small in God's eyes (Isa. 64:6). The problem is that we use the wrong standard, which leads to the wrong definition of "greatness." We are not our own measure—God is. This is what God would teach the people of Babel and what He teaches us.

**What areas in your life do you tend to evaluate by the wrong standards?**

**How would you define greatness? How is that different from the way God defines it?**

# Genesis 11:8-9

From the beginning, God's instruction to humanity was to spread out across the earth to subdue it and rule over it as His image-bearing representatives (Gen. 1:28; 9:1,7). One of the ways God was to be glorified was through people (the pinnacle of His creation) fulfilling the cultural mandate He gave them in every corner of the globe.

But the sin born in Eden continued to dig deeper into the hearts of people, and their rebellion grew. God's command to spread out was not misunderstood or even ignored—it was rejected outright on the plains of Shinar. But God's plan cannot be defeated. The people would not scatter across the earth, so He would do it for them. Instead of spreading out as one people of God, they did so as a broken, fragmented, and divided people—a people in need of someone to rescue them from this condition and restore them as one family of God. That someone would be Jesus.

**How has God worked in your life and circumstances despite your disobedience?**

**When have you seen people and relationships restored through Jesus?**

# Isaiah 55:1-13

Isaiah 55 is a call for all people—all the nations (v. 5)—to come to the Lord and experience the goodness of a relationship with Him. This is a picture of God satisfying His people; thirst-quenching water and the choicest of foods available at no cost.

Along with the invitation to come and experience the Lord's goodness, is also an admonition for how to do this—through repentance (vv. 6-7). All who want to come to God must turn from their wicked ways, abandon their sinful thoughts, and return to the Lord.

The reason this is essential: Because God's ways and God's thoughts are not ours (vv. 8-9). They are higher, loftier, and grander than anything we can dream up. True repentance requires us to grasp this: We completely forsake any perceived goodness in our hearts and desperately and completely entrust ourselves to God's mercy and grace.

**When do you tend to place your trust in yourself rather than fully relying on God?**

# Genesis 11:10-32

The genealogy in Genesis 11 serves as a bridge between Shem—Noah's blessed son (Gen. 9:24-27)—and Abram—through whom God would form the people of promise. Humanity's willful rebellion in Babel did not hinder God's plan for people to scatter and it didn't stop God's unfolding plan of redemption.

But we can't miss verse 30—it is quite important because it introduces the next "obstacle" God would overcome in the early stages of His plan to provide a descendant to rescue people from sin. The man and woman God would choose to form a nation—a family—would be barren and unable to conceive. Once again God would show that nothing is impossible for Him.

**What are some surprising ways God has worked in your own life?**

**How can you use these stories to show others His power and grace?**