

Hope Leads to Joy

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WHAT  
BRINGS  
YOU  
JOY?

## The POINT ➤

Suffering for Christ can deepen  
our walk with Him.

### > 1 PETER 4:1-2,12-19

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same understanding—because the one who suffers in the flesh is finished with sin—  
<sup>2</sup> in order to live the remaining time in the flesh no longer for human desires, but for God's will.

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<sup>12</sup> Dear friends, don't be surprised when the fiery ordeal comes among you to test you as if something unusual were happening to you. <sup>13</sup> Instead, rejoice as you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may also rejoice with great joy when his glory is revealed.  
<sup>14</sup> If you are ridiculed for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests

on you. <sup>15</sup> Let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or a meddler. <sup>16</sup> But if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God in having that name. <sup>17</sup> For the time has come for judgment to begin with God's household, and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who disobey the gospel of God? <sup>18</sup> And if a righteous person is saved with difficulty, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner? <sup>19</sup> So then, let those who suffer according to God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator while doing what is good.



# THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

## FACT:

Michael Phelps is the most highly decorated Olympic athlete, and during his prime, he swam up to eight miles a day. Meanwhile, elephants swim an average of 20 miles a day.<sup>2</sup>



## LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // CREATION

God's creation functions in an orderly way and serves His purposes as He exercises sovereign rule over it all.

Joni Eareckson Tada grew up in Baltimore as an active teenager. One day, while swimming in the Chesapeake Bay, she dove into the water and broke her neck, becoming paralyzed from the shoulders down. After two years of intense rehab, she left the hospital in a wheelchair, but she was still praying for a breakthrough.

In the Gospel of Mark, Joni read where Jesus had been healing crowds of people, and then He went off to be alone for a time of prayer. When His disciples found Him the next morning, they wanted Jesus to come back to the city to continue ministering to the crowds. After all, healing the sick and delivering the oppressed was a good thing! Jesus, however, refused and told the disciples they were going to other towns to preach—even though more people needed His healing touch (Mark 1:33-38).

That's when Joni realized that it wasn't about Jesus' not caring. He did, but healing wasn't His main focus. The gospel was! That's when she began searching for deeper healing, not just physical healing. Joni had joy in her walk with Christ, even in her trials.<sup>1</sup> No matter how much suffering we face, God can use it to deepen our walk with Him.

## 1 PETER 4:1-2

**1** What obstacles tend to keep us from thinking like Christ?

**2** What are some symptoms of living with a focus on human desires rather than on God's will?



*Happiness comes  
when good things  
happen to us.  
However, even  
when terrible things  
happen, we can  
experience joy.  
#BSFLHope*

## 1 PETER 4:12-14

- 3** List some ways you've seen Christians respond when ridiculed.
- 4** What hinders us from rejoicing when times are difficult?
- 5** Why is hope a necessary element for rejoicing in the midst of suffering?

## 1 PETER 4:15-19

- 6** How do you typically respond to suffering?
- 7** When have you experienced discomfort because of your faith in Christ?
- 8** How can we bring glory to God through our suffering?



# LIVE IT OUT



## LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // CREATION

*God's creation functions in an orderly way and serves His purposes as He exercises sovereign rule over it all.*

Scripture teaches clearly that God is sovereign over creation. At times, this can be difficult to understand, particularly when we face suffering. Yet even in the most difficult circumstances, we can know that God is at work. In fact, the Bible teaches that through difficult times, we are being shaped into the likeness of Jesus (Jas. 1).

## > CHRIST

Because of the curse of sin, all people are going to suffer. Further, Jesus has told us that because of following Him, we'll face suffering.

**9** When have you complained because of the difficult things you face?  
How often do you respond with complaining?

**10** This week, what will you do to show gratitude to God in the middle of your struggles?

GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

BIBLE

SALVATION

**CREATION**

CHURCH

PEOPLE

FAMILY

COMMUNITY  
& WORLD

# >COMMUNITY

First Peter 4:17 teaches that judgment begins with the household of God. This means that the people who belong to the church are to make sure the church is holy.

**11** When has someone helped you overcome a struggle with the sin in your life?



**12** How will you lovingly and patiently help a friend at church work through their struggles? Make sure to be kind and encouraging.

# >CULTURE

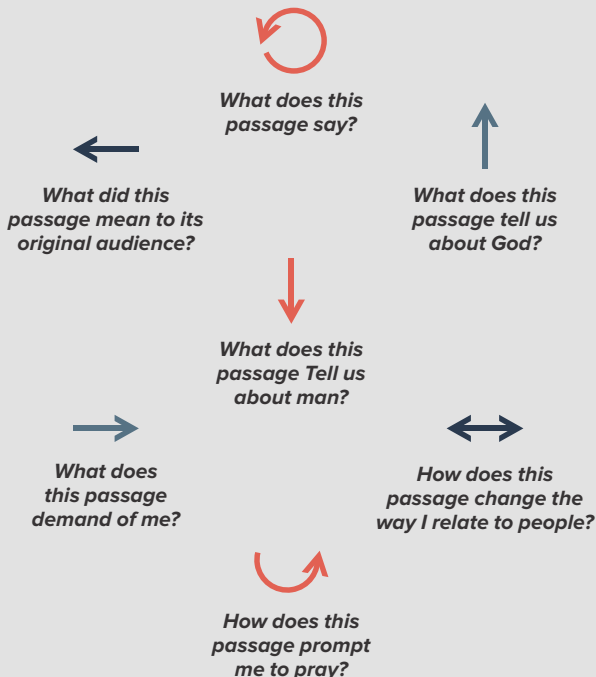
**13** Make a list of 10 things that have brought you joy today.


Share these things with friends who aren't Christians. Make sure to let them know that you understand everything good in our lives comes from God.

# DAILY DEVOTIONS



## The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



## Day One **JOHN 16:16**

At the Last Supper, Jesus took the time to teach His disciples many important truths about the kingdom of God. He used creative object lessons, such as the bread and cup and the washing of feet, to help them grasp essential concepts. Jesus again reminded the disciples of the nature of His ministry—that He would not be a conquering warrior or a powerful king (at least, not in the earthly sense), but that He would serve the world through His rejection and suffering. And to top it all off, Jesus shared that He would soon leave them. For the disciples who had put their lives on the line to follow Jesus, this had to be some of the toughest news imaginable. Jesus did mention that they would see Him again, but the disciples had a knack for missing Jesus' point and so do we.

- **How do you think the disciples may have felt at hearing this news?**
- **Why do we sometimes miss certain parts of what Scripture teaches? How can we make sure to receive all that God teaches us?**



## Day Two

# JOHN 16:20

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Within a few hours of this conversation, Jesus would be arrested and murdered. Because the world is naturally opposed to the gospel—after all, no one wants to be told we’re hopelessly lost, and further, that we can do nothing to help ourselves—many would celebrate the death of this blasphemous agitator. The disciples would be destroyed beneath the weight of their hopes and dreams being crushed. After all, they’d staked their entire lives on Jesus’ being the one who would lead God’s people into blessing. But it had all gone wrong, Jesus was dead, and they were left all alone. But this wouldn’t be the end of the story. The world’s celebrating would be turned into shock, and the disciples’ gloom would be turned into jubilation. Jesus would leave, but they would indeed see Him again.

- **When has someone found joy in your suffering? How did it make you feel?**
- **How should we respond when others suffer?**

## Day Three

# JOHN 16:21

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When Adam and Eve disobeyed in the garden, the curse affected women in that bearing children would be excruciatingly painful from that point on. Jesus used this as an illustration for what the disciples would experience in the coming days. Childbirth is said to be among the most physically painful experiences a person suffers in this life. Yet, once a mother has made it through the pain, the suffering is far outweighed by the sheer joy found in her new baby. The disciples’ experience would be similar—the emotional pain, the loss, and the hopelessness they would experience would be nearly unbearable. But Jesus’ resurrection would wipe away all the pain and distress, and in its place, the disciples would know exhilaration.

- **How do you think Jesus’ resurrection impacted the disciples?**
- **When have you experienced suffering or disappointment turn into joy?**

## Day Four

# JOHN 16:22

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Most people today pursue happiness. We play video games to make us happy. We watch movies or eat our favorite foods to make us happy. We even work hard at things that matter to us or spend time with friends, all in the pursuit of happiness. But the problem is that, when we pursue happiness from a worldly perspective, if we ever lose these things, we instantly become unhappy. The joy the disciples would experience as a result of Jesus' resurrection was completely different. This joy wouldn't be based on the day-to-day ups and downs that are so common in this life. Joy in Christ is rooted in the fact that sin and death are defeated once and for all by His resurrection. When we trust Christ, seeking meaning and purpose in Him, we receive a joy that can never be taken from us.

- **Where do you seek happiness?**
- **How can you make sure you're seeking joy in Christ that can never be taken away?**

## Day Five

# JOHN 16:23-24

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Soon after Jesus' resurrection, He would ascend to heaven, and He would no longer be available to answer the disciples' questions. However, the Father wouldn't leave the disciples alone. Just a few weeks later, the Holy Spirit would come into the lives of all believers, and He would be the disciples' teacher. He would also intercede before the Father on behalf of His people. Praying in the name of Jesus means praying in ways that represent Jesus' desires. When we pray this way, the Father is happy to give what we ask for, and the Father's blessings are the source of true joy in our lives.

- **What kind of things did Jesus pray for? Why should we pray for the same things?**
- **How does praying in the name of Jesus bring us joy?**