

# SEVEN ARROWS



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?



What does this passage prompt me to pray to God?

## ROMANS 12



The first 11 chapters of the book of Romans contain the most extended discussion of the gospel message found in the Paul's writings. In chapter 12, he transitioned to a description of the life of a follower of Jesus. This was Paul's normal pattern in his letters. First, he summarized the good news, then he explained how that good news should change our lives. This order is important. Christians do not strive to obey God in order to be saved, but because they are saved. As Paul wrote here, they offered their lives as an act of worship to God. Everything they did was a response to the greatness of God-it showed how much He is worth. Worship isn't just what we do when we gather with the church to sing, it is every decision we make, every thought we think, every act we perform. We worship by reflecting God's image and showing His greatness in the ways we live each day.

# 1 CORINTHIANS 9:24-27



The fact that we don't earn our salvation does not mean our actions aren't important. The very fact that God loved us so much that He sent Jesus to pay the price for our sins should actually make us more passionate to obey Him. Paul compared the Christian life to a race and challenged everyone to strive for the prize of faithfulness to God. Like athletes, this race will require great self-control. Any athlete who wants to win will have to watch what he or she eats and consistently train in order to operate at maximum potential. In the same way, Christians who want to be faithful will deny themselves the sinful cravings their hearts once desired, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, they will discipline themselves to say *no* to sin and *yes* to God every day. This type of self-control is key to living the life we were meant to live.

# 1 CORINTHIANS 12



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God gives His people gifts that allow them to reflect His image in unique ways. The church is like a human body with various members having responsibilities that make the church healthy and effective. The key is for all church members to use the gifts given by God to serve one another in love. There are various lists of gifts throughout the New Testament. These serve as examples, but the lists are not meant to describe every single way someone might serve the church. However, we can be certain that every Christian, filled with the Holy Spirit, is given a gift to build up the church and help fulfill its mission. Paul cautioned against comparing your gift to that of someone else. He reminded the church that God knows what He is doing. He gives gifts as He desires. It's not up to us to question God's wisdom, but simply to use what we've been given to fulfill the mission He puts before each of us.

# 1 CORINTHIANS 13



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Love is at the very center of the Christian life, and this has always been true. In fact, all the Old Testament law can be summarized as a command to love-God above all else, and others who are made in His image. The church is no different. We are a people united in a common love for God and called to a sacrificial love for one another. Paul made it clear that God empowers His people to do all sorts of amazing things, but any action that is not motivated by love is useless-God has always been most concerned with the heart behind our actions. He can use anyone or anything to accomplish His purposes, and He doesn't have to use any one of us. He doesn't need our actions-He wants our hearts. The fact that He is willing to use us in His mission is a sheer privilege. This should compel us to love Him and , in turn, love the people He's created.

## EPHESIANS 5:22-33



Paul compared the love of Jesus for His people to the love a husband should have for his wife. In fact, God created marriage to show the world how He loves His people. Sadly, in a broken world, marriages are often poor reflections of God's love. The tragedy of divorce shows that people don't love like God does. The fact that people are difficult to love should come as no surprise. We're all sinful, which is why God created marriage to put His love on display. Jesus loves His people in spite of our sin. He gave His life to show His love even though we've continually turned our backs on Him to pursue other loves. The type of love God shows isn't just the feeling of affection-it's a commitment based on His promises. He pledged His love to His people, and He will always be faithful to His promises. When husbands and wives love one another in this way, they show the world what God is like.