



September 11



## The One Who Understands

Jennifer Benson Schuldt



*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.* [John 1:14](#)

Read: [John 1:1–18](#)

Bible in a Year: [Proverbs 10–12](#); [2 Corinthians 4](#)

John Babler is the chaplain for the police and fire departments in his Texas community. During a twenty-two-week sabbatical from his job, he attended police academy training so that he could better understand the situations law enforcement officers face. Through spending time with the other cadets and learning about the intense challenges of the profession, Babler gained a new sense of humility and empathy. In the future, he hopes to be more effective as he counsels police officers who struggle with emotional stress, fatigue, and loss.

We know that God understands the situations we face because He made us and sees everything that happens to us. We also know He understands because He has been to earth and experienced life as a human being. He “became flesh and made his dwelling among us” as the person of Jesus Christ (John 1:14).

Jesus’s earthly life included a wide range of difficulty. He felt the searing heat of the sun, the pain of an empty stomach, and the uncertainty of homelessness. Emotionally, He endured the tension of disagreements, the burn of betrayal, and the ongoing threat of violence.

Jesus experienced the joys of friendship and family love, as well as the worst problems that we face here on earth. He provides hope. He is the Wonderful Counselor who patiently listens to our concerns with insight and care (Isa. 9:6). He is the One who can say, “I’ve been through that. I understand.”

*Dear Lord, thank You for caring enough to humble Yourself and come to earth as a human being.*

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**God understands the struggles we face.**

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September 12



## Taking the First Step

Poh Fang Chia



*God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. **2 Corinthians 5:19***

Read: **2 Corinthians 5:11–21**

Bible in a Year: **Proverbs 13–15; 2 Corinthians 5**

Tham Dashu sensed something was missing in his life. So he started going to church—the same church his daughter attended. But they never went together. In earlier days, he had offended her, which drove a wedge between them. So, Tham would slip in when the singing started and leave promptly after the service ended.

Church members shared the gospel story with him, but Tham always politely rejected their invitation to put his faith in Jesus. Still, he kept coming to church.

One day Tham fell gravely ill. His daughter plucked up the courage and wrote him a letter. She shared how Christ had changed her life, and she sought reconciliation with her dad. That night, Tham put his faith in Jesus and the family was reconciled. A few days later, Tham died and entered into the presence of Jesus—at peace with God and his loved ones.

The apostle Paul wrote that we are to “try to persuade others” about the truth of God’s love and forgiveness (2 Cor. 5:11). He said that it is “Christ’s love [that] compels us” to carry out His work of reconciliation (v. 14).

Our willingness to forgive may help others realize that God desires to reconcile us to Himself (v. 19). Would you lean on God’s strength to show them His love today?

*Is there someone you need to try to reconcile with? What practical first step can you take today?*

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**Our willingness to seek reconciliation with others shows God’s heart to them.**

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September 13

## Stay Awhile

David C. McCasland



*All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. **Hebrews 11:13***

Read: **Hebrews 11:8–13**

Bible in a Year: **Proverbs 16–18; 2 Corinthians 6**

During a discussion of *The Lord of the Rings* movie trilogy, a teenager said he prefers his stories in books rather than movies. When asked why, the young man replied, “With a book, I can stay there as long as I want.” There is something to be said for the power of lingering in a book, especially the Bible, and “inhabiting” the stories there.

Hebrews 11, often called “the faith chapter” of the Bible, mentions nineteen people by name. Each one traveled a road of difficulty and doubt, yet chose to obey God. “All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth” (v. 13).

How easy it is to rush through our Bible reading without pondering the people and events in the text. Our self-imposed time schedule robs us of going deeper into God’s truth and His plan for our lives. Yet, when we are willing to stay awhile, we find ourselves caught up in the real-life dramas of people like us who chose to stake their lives on God’s faithfulness.

When we open God’s Word, it’s good to recall that we can stay as long as we want.

*Father in heaven, thank You for Your written Word and the examples of people who lived by faith. Help us to follow You as they did.*

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**Linger in God’s Word and you’ll find stories of faith.**

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September 14



## We Have a King!

Xochitl Dixon



*In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit. [Judges 21:25](#)*

Read: [Judges 2:11–23](#)

Bible in a Year: [Proverbs 19–21](#); [2 Corinthians 7](#)

After attacking my husband with hurtful words when a situation didn't go my way, I snubbed the Holy Spirit's authority as He reminded me of Bible verses that revealed my sinful attitudes. Was nursing my stubborn pride worth the collateral damage in my marriage or being disobedient to God? Absolutely not. But by the time I asked for forgiveness from the Lord and my spouse, I'd left a wake of wounds behind me—the result of ignoring wise counsel and living as if I didn't have to answer to anyone but myself.

There was a time when the Israelites had a rebellious attitude. After the death of Moses, Joshua led the Israelites into the promised land. Under his leadership, the Israelite's served the Lord (Judg. 2:7). But after Joshua and the generation that outlived him died, the Israelites forgot God and what He'd done (v. 10). They rejected godly leadership and embraced sin (vv. 11–15).

Things improved when the Lord raised up judges (vv. 16–18), who served like kings. But when each judge died, the Israelites returned to defying God. Living as if they didn't have anyone to answer to but themselves, they suffered devastating consequences (vv. 19–22). But that doesn't have to be our reality. We can submit to the sovereign authority of the eternal Ruler we were made to follow—Jesus—because He is our living Judge and King of Kings.

*Jesus, please help us remember You are our living King of Kings and Lord of Lords, almighty and worthy of our loving obedience and trust.*

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**God gives us the power and the privilege to enjoy the rewards of doing things His way.**

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September 15



## What's Your Father's Name?

Keila Ochoa



*To those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. [John 1:12](#)*

**Read:** [John 8:39–47](#)

**Bible in a Year:** [Proverbs 22–24](#); [2 Corinthians 8](#)

When I went to buy a cell phone in the Middle East, I was asked the typical questions: name, nationality, address. But then as the clerk was filling out the form, he asked, “What’s your father’s name?” That question surprised me, and I wondered why it was important. Knowing my father’s name would not be important in my culture, but here it was necessary in order to establish my identity. In some cultures, ancestry is important.

The Israelites believed in the importance of ancestry too. They were proud of their patriarch Abraham, and they thought being part of Abraham’s clan made them God’s children. Their human ancestry was connected, in their opinion, to their spiritual family.

Hundreds of years later when Jesus was talking with the Jews, He pointed out that this was not so. They could say Abraham was their earthly ancestor, but if they didn’t love Him—the One sent by the Father—they were not part of God’s family.

The same applies today. We don’t choose our human family, but we can decide the spiritual family we belong to. If we believe in Jesus’s name, God gives us the right to become His children (John 1:12).

Who is your spiritual Father? Have you decided to follow Jesus? Let this be the day you trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins and become part of God’s family.

*Dear Lord, You are my heavenly and eternal Father. Thank You for Jesus, my Savior.*

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**God is our Eternal Father.**

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