



August 21



Be Still

David C. McCasland



The Lord Almighty is with us, the God of Jacob is our fortress. [Psalm 46:11](#)

Read: [Psalm 46:1–11](#)

Bible in a Year: [Psalms 107–109](#); [1 Corinthians 4](#)

"We've created more information in the last five years than in all of human history before it, and it's coming at us all the time" (Daniel Levitin, author of *The Organized Mind: Thinking Straight in the Age of Information Overload*). "In a sense," Levitin says, "we become addicted to the hyperstimulation." The constant barrage of news and knowledge can dominate our minds. In today's environment of media bombardment, it becomes increasingly difficult to find time to be quiet, to think, and to pray.

Psalm 46:10 says, "Be still, and know that I am God," reminding us of the necessity to take time to focus on the Lord. Many people find that a "quiet time" is an essential part of each day—a time to read the Bible, pray, and consider the goodness and greatness of God.

When we, like the writer of Psalm 46, experience the reality that "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble" (v. 1), it drives our fear away (v. 2), shifts our focus from the world's turmoil to God's peace, and creates a quiet confidence that our Lord is in control (v. 10).

No matter how chaotic the world may become around us, we can find quietness and strength in our heavenly Father's love and power.

Heavenly Father, we bring our noisy lives and our cluttered minds to You so that we can learn to be still and know that You are God.

Each day we need to be still and listen to the Lord.



August 22



Ripe for Harvest

Amy Boucher Pye



Open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. [John 4:35](#)

Read: [John 4:35–38](#)

Bible in a Year: [Psalms 110–112](#); [1 Corinthians 5](#)

In late summer, we went for a walk in the New Forest in England and had fun picking the blackberries that grew in the wild while watching the horses frolicking nearby. As I enjoyed the bounty of the sweet fruit planted by others perhaps many years before, I thought of Jesus's words to His disciples: "I sent you to reap what you have not worked for" (John 4:38).

I love the generosity of God's kingdom reflected in those words. He lets us enjoy the fruits of someone else's labors, such as when we share our love for Jesus with a friend whose family—unknown to us—has been praying for her for years. I also love the implied limits of Jesus's words, for we may plant seeds that we will never harvest but someone else may. Therefore, we can rest in the tasks before us, not being hoodwinked into thinking that we are responsible for the outcomes. God's work, after all, doesn't depend on us. He has all of the resources for a bountiful harvest, and we are privileged to play a role in it.

I wonder what fields ready for harvest are before you? Before me? May we heed Jesus's loving instruction: "Open your eyes and look at the fields!" (v. 35).

Creator God, thank You for Your great generosity in entrusting us to do Your work. May I be alert to the opportunities to share Your good news.

We can reap what others have sown.



August 23



Our Guilt Is Gone

Xochitl Dixon



I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." And you forgave the guilt of my sin. [Psalm 32:5](#)

Read: [Psalm 32:1–11](#)

Bible in a Year: [Psalms 113–115](#); [1 Corinthians 6](#)

As a young girl, I invited a friend to browse with me through a gift shop near my home. She shocked me, though, by shoving a handful of colorful crayon-shaped barrettes into my pocket and yanking me out the door of the shop without paying for them. Guilt gnawed at me for a week before I approached my mom—my confession pouring out as quickly as my tears.

Grieved over my bad choice of not resisting my friend, I returned the stolen items, apologized, and vowed never to steal again. The owner told me never to come back. But because my mom forgave me and assured me that I had done my best to make things right, I slept peacefully that night.

King David also rested in forgiveness through confession (Ps. 32:1–2). He had hidden his sins against Bathsheba and Uriah (2 Sam. 11–12) until his “strength was sapped” (Ps. 32:3–4). But once David refused to “cover up” his wrongs, the Lord erased his guilt (v. 5). God protected him “from trouble” and wrapped him in “songs of deliverance” (v. 7). David rejoiced because the “Lord’s unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in him” (v. 10).

We can’t choose the consequences of our sins or control people’s responses when we confess and seek forgiveness. But the Lord can empower us to enjoy freedom from the bondage of sin and peace through confession, as He confirms that our guilt is gone—forever.

Lord, when we confess our sins and receive Your forgiveness, please help us believe our guilt is completely and forever wiped away.

When God forgives, our guilt is gone.



August 24



The Interests of Others

Dave Branon



In humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests. [Philippians 2:3-4](#)

Read: [Philippians 2:1-11](#)

Bible in a Year: [Psalms 116-118](#); [1 Corinthians 7:1-19](#)

My friend Jaime works for a huge international corporation. In his early days with the company, a man came by his desk, struck up a conversation, and asked Jaime what he did there. After telling the man about his work, Jaime asked the man his name. "My name is Rich," he replied.

"Nice to meet you," Jaime answered. "And what do you do around here?"

"Oh, I am the owner."

Jaime suddenly realized that this casual, humble conversation was his introduction to one of the richest men in the world.

In this day of self-glorification and the celebration of "me," this little story can serve as a reminder of Paul's important words in the book of Philippians: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit" (2:3). People who turn their attention to others and not on themselves have the characteristics Paul mentions.

When we "value others above [ourselves]," we demonstrate Christlike humility (v. 3). We mirror Jesus, who came not "to be served, but to serve" (Mark 10:45). When we take "the very nature of a servant" (Phil. 2:7), we have the mindset of Jesus (v. 5).

As we interact with others today, let's not look on our own interests alone but also "to the interests of the others" (v. 4).

Jesus, You gave us the model of humility when You left heaven's splendors to become a humble servant on earth. Help us practice Christlike humility in everything we do.

Serve God by serving others.



August 25



Lured Away

Linda Washington



Each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. [James 1:14](#)

Read: [James 1:5–6, 12–15](#)

Bible in a Year: [Psalm 119:1–88](#); [1 Corinthians 7:20–40](#)

In the summer of 2016, my niece convinced me to play Pokémon Go—a game played on a smartphone, using the phone's camera. The object of the game is to capture little creatures called Pokémon. When one appears in the game, a red and white ball also appears on the phone's screen. To capture a Pokémon, the player has to flick the ball toward it with the movement of a finger. Pokémon are more easily caught, however, by using a lure to attract them.

Pokémon characters aren't the only ones who can be lured away. In his New Testament letter to believers, James, the brother of Jesus, reminds us that we "are dragged away by [our] *own* evil desire" (1:14, emphasis added). In other words, our desires work with temptation to lure us down a wrong path. Though we may be tempted to blame God or even Satan for our problems, our real danger lies within.

But there is good news. We can escape the lure of temptation by talking to God about the things that tempt us. Though "God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone," as James explains in 1:13, He understands our human desire to do what's wrong. We have only to ask for the wisdom God promised to provide (1:1–6).

Lord, when I'm tempted, show me the door of escape.

Pray your way past the urge to do wrong.
