



August 7



Life to the Full

Monica Brands



I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. [John 10:10](#)

Read: [Mark 10:28–31](#); [John 10:9–10](#)

Bible in a Year: [Psalms 72–73](#); [Romans 9:1–15](#)

When I stopped by to visit my sister's family, my nephews eagerly showed me their new chore system, a set of *Chorapoly* boards. Each colorful electronic board keeps track of their chores. A job well done means the kids can hit a green button, which adds points to their "spending" account. A misdeed like leaving the back door open results in a fine being deducted from the total. Since a high-points total leads to exciting rewards such as computer time—and misdeeds deduct from that total—my nephews are now unusually motivated to do their work and to keep the door closed!

The ingenious system had me joking that I wished I had such an exciting motivational tool! But of course God *has* given us motivation. Rather than simply commanding obedience, Jesus has promised that a life of following Him, while costly, is also a life of abundance, "life . . . to the full" (John 10:10). Experiencing life in His kingdom is worth "one hundred times" the cost—now and eternally (Mark 10:29–30).

We can rejoice in the fact that we serve a generous God, One who does not reward and punish as we deserve. He generously accepts our weakest efforts—even welcoming and rewarding latecomers to His kingdom as generously as old-timers (see Matt. 20:1–16). In light of this reality, let us joyfully serve Him today.

Lord, help us to remember there is great meaning in following You and that it is all so worth it.

Following Jesus is the way to a rich and satisfying life.



August 8



Available to All

David C. McCasland



For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. [Mark 10:45](#)

Read: [Mark 10:42–52](#)

Bible in a Year: [Psalms 74–76](#); [Romans 9:16–33](#)

In today's celebrity-obsessed culture, it isn't surprising that entrepreneurs are marketing "celebrities as products ... allowing them to sell their personal time and attention." Vauhini Vara's article in *The New Yorker* noted that for \$15,000, you can have a personal meeting with singer Shakira, while \$12,000 will give you and eleven guests lunch with celebrity chef Michael Chiarello at his estate.

Many people treated Jesus like a celebrity as they followed Him from place to place, listened to His teaching, observed His miracles, and sought healing from His touch. Yet Jesus was never self-important or aloof, but available to all. When His followers James and John were privately jockeying for position in His coming kingdom, Jesus reminded all His disciples, "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all" (Mark 10:43–44).

Soon after Jesus said this, He stopped a procession of people following Him to ask a blind beggar, "What do you want me to do for you?" (v. 51) "Rabbi, I want to see," the man replied. He received his sight immediately and followed Jesus (v. 52).

Our Lord "did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (v. 45). May we, like Him, be compassionate and available to others today.

Lord Jesus, we honor You as the Son of God and Lord of glory who died for all. Help us to demonstrate Your love to others today.

Follow Jesus's example: Reach out to others in need.



August 9



The Heart of Christ

Mart DeHaan



Please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written. [Exodus 32:32](#)

Read: [Exodus 32:21–32](#)

Bible in a Year: [Psalms 77–78](#); [Romans 10](#)

An Australian journalist who spent 400 days in an Egyptian jail expressed mixed emotions when he was released. While admitting his relief, he said he accepted his freedom with incredible concern for the friends he was leaving behind. He said he found it extremely hard to say goodbye to fellow reporters who had been arrested and jailed with him—not knowing how much longer they were going to be held.

Moses also expressed great anxiety at the thought of leaving friends behind. When faced with the thought of losing the brother, sister, and nation that had worshiped a golden calf while he was meeting with God on Mount Sinai (Ex. 32:11–14), he interceded for them. Showing how deeply he cared, he pled, “But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written” (v. 32).

The apostle Paul later expressed a similar concern for family, friends, and nation. Grieving their unbelief in Jesus, Paul said he would be willing to give up his own relationship with Christ if by such love he could save his brothers and sisters (Rom. 9:3).

Looking back, we see that Moses and Paul both expressed the heart of Christ. Yet, the love they could only *feel*, and the sacrifice they could only *offer*, Jesus *fulfilled*—to be with us forever.

Father in heaven, thank You for reminding us how much it is like You to be willing to live—and die—for those who have not yet seen how much You love them.

Caring for others honors Jesus's love for us.



August 10



Our Father's Face

David H. Roper



Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved. [Psalm 80:3](#)

Read: [Psalm 80](#)

Bible in a Year: [Psalms 79–80](#); [Romans 11:1–18](#)

I remember my father's face. It was hard to read. He was a kind man, but stoic and self-contained. As a child, I often searched his face, looking for a smile or other show of affection. Faces are us. A frown, a sullen look, a smile, and crinkly eyes reveal what we feel about others. Our faces are our "tell."

Asaph, the author of Psalm 80, was distraught and wanted to see the Lord's face. He looked north from his vantage point in Jerusalem and saw Judah's sister-state, Israel, collapse under the weight of the Assyrian Empire. With her buffer state gone, Judah was vulnerable to invasion from all sides—Assyria from the north, Egypt from the south, and the Arab nations from the east. She was outnumbered and outmatched.

Asaph gathered up his fears in a prayer, three times repeated (80:3, 7, 19), "Make your face shine on us, that we may be saved." (Or, in other words, let me see Your smile.)

It's good to look away from our fears and search our heavenly Father's face. The best way to see God's face is to look at the cross. The cross is His "tell" (John 3:16).

So know this: When your Father looks at you, He has a great big smile on His face. You're very safe!

Ask God to shine His face on you. For further help in prayer, try praying this Psalm or others.

Tell us what your favorite Psalm is and encourage others: [Facebook.com/ourdailybread](https://www.facebook.com/ourdailybread).

God's love for us is as expansive as the open arms of Christ on the cross.



August 11



If Only . . .

Cindy Hess Kasper



Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. [John 11:32](#)

Read: [John 11:21–35](#)

Bible in a Year: [Psalms 81–83](#); [Romans 11:19–36](#)

As we exited the parking lot, my husband slowed the car to wait for a young woman riding her bike. When Tom nodded to indicate she could go first, she smiled, waved, and rode on. Moments later, the driver from a parked SUV threw his door open, knocking the young bicyclist to the pavement. Her legs bleeding, she cried as she examined her bent-up bike.

Later, we reflected on the accident: *If only we had made her wait . . . If only the driver had looked before opening his door. If only . . . Difficulties catch us up in a cycle of second-guessing ourselves. If only I had known my child was with teens who were drinking . . . If only we had found the cancer earlier . . .*

When unexpected trouble comes, we sometimes question the goodness of God. We may even feel the despair that Martha and Mary experienced when their brother died. *Oh, if Jesus had only come when He first found out that Lazarus was sick!* (John 11:21, 32).

Like Martha and Mary, we don't always understand why hard things happen to us. But we can rest in the knowledge that God is working out His purposes for a greater good. In every circumstance, we can trust the wisdom of our faithful and loving God.

Father, You have carried me through hard circumstances before. Thank You for teaching me to trust Your heart of love even when I don't understand what You are doing in my life.

For encouragement read, *Why? Seeing God in Our Pain* at discoveryseries.org/cb151.

To trust God in the light is nothing, but to trust Him in the dark—that is faith. Charles Haddon Spurgeon
