

# ***Our Prayers Make A Difference***

***International Bible Lesson***

**Philippians 1:12-26**

**Sunday, January 6, 2013**

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*“For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ”* (Philippians 1:19—KJV).

*“Because I know that by means of your prayers and the help which comes from the Spirit of Jesus Christ I shall be set free”* (Philippians 1:19—GNB).

*“For I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance”* (Philippians 1:19—NRSV).

Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians from prison, and at that time he did not know if he would live or die. From what we learn from the Bible, no followers of God suffered more for their faith and the purposes of God than Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul did; yet, both gave reasons for rejoicing while they suffered. Paul rejoiced that he could keep spreading the good news about Jesus even from prison, and the whole imperial guard had come to learn about the value of faith in Jesus Christ.

Paul also encouraged the Philippian Christians to keep on praying for him. For reasons unknown to us, sometimes God will only act after His people have prayed. We do know that prayer makes a difference, and praying draws us closer to God and those we pray for, which inspires a deeper love for God in us and others. Paul also depended on the Spirit of Jesus Christ, Who filled him with joy. Since Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of God the Father in heaven, “the Spirit of Jesus Christ” is another name for “the Holy Spirit,” Who the Father sent after Jesus ascended into heaven. Through the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ indwells all who trust in Jesus. The Holy Spirit helped Paul serve Jesus and endure his sufferings in prison. Paul also knew that the Holy Spirit could work upon the emperor and his captors to deliver him and accomplish all of God’s purposes. Our prayers and the Holy Spirit work the same today as they did in Bible times.

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## **Thinking Further**

1. Thinking of the good consequences of Paul’s imprisonment, can you think of any other examples in the Bible when something bad happened to someone and God worked it out for good?

2. Since Paul was a faithful apostle of Jesus Christ, how would you explain to someone why Paul was in prison?

3. What are some of the ways Paul serves as a good example for other Christians to follow?

4. What might you say to someone who expressed envy or jealousy of another Christian?

5. What are some good reasons for telling others about Jesus Christ?

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