

A Simple Truth from Paul



I am often struck by a powerful truth regarding prayer that is “between the lines” in 1 Corinthians 1:8-11. Paul, who has just come off a very difficult missionary journey, is writing to the Corinthian church to both report and to thank his supporters.

“We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia” he begins. “We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.”

This is not some missionary writing in his annual newsletter, saying something like, “This was a tough year, but we knew people back home were praying. This encouraged us to keep going.” No, Paul literally believed that the prayer of the Corinthian believers kept Satan at bay. Satan was trying to destroy them and stop the mission, but it was their prayers that stopped that from happening.

Most believers do not understand this truth, but when you pray (or don't pray) for missionaries or a ministry, in the spiritual scheme of things you are as much a part of the success or failure of that missionary's ministry as he or she

is! That is the spiritual truth.

Most of us find it difficult to sustain much prayer for things we can see or don't hear about regularly. But our prayers make a huge difference in the heavenly realm. Believe that!

—Jonathan Graf is the publisher of Prayer Connect and a popular speaker on prayer.

Check out Jon's book, *Praying Like Paul*. It teaches us how to pray God's purposes for those we love.