

Many Christians have rightly asked what they can do for prisoners. Somehow, prisoners have a special place in the hearts of Christ's followers, something seen in few other people. But the greatest hope and power for prisons is not from those who come from outside, bearing words of encouragement. It is in the power of God that explodes in the tight confines of prisons through the lives and hearts of men and women whose lives unfold there day and night, year after year.

Most prisoners should never forget, however, that prison is not where their lives shall end. Prisoners return to every village, town and city in the world, with a sense of freedom that others cannot appreciate. Those who dwell with God in prison can return to their people with a power that few others know. In direct proportion to their growth and influence in the prison will be the measure of their transforming power wherever they go afterwards. Potentially, the most powerful people in the world are in prisons today.

You have just finished reading the first chapter of the 32 page booklet of the same name, "Prisoner Power." If you are ready for God to do such a work in your life, ask for a copy of the complete booklet from the same source that provided you this tract. It is available from all Christian jail and prison ministries that are served by Philippi Prison Ministries.

May God bless you in your personal spiritual pilgrimage.

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PRISONER POWER



A Prisoner's Declaration of Purpose



Potentially, the most powerful people in the world are in prisons today. All that follows is a demonstration of that fact accompanied by a practical guide-book by which any prisoner can become a powerhouse to change the world from the inside out.

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masses of the world's second largest nation. And, out of the cell, he led them to freedom and independence from the foreign power that had controlled his people and nation for three centuries. Curiously, he never sought or held public office. That was for the politicians who had been more enamored by the trappings of the "free world" outside the prisons. Gandhi knew that real power is not political nor is it monetary. It is the invincible power of a man who knew that his life was poured out for his people and whom God used to awaken a people that languished in modern servitude.

Only a short time ago died Nelson Mandela, a small black man who spent 27 years of a life sentence in prison, much of this in solitary. This was his down payment on the price of freedom for his people. He emerged, finally, from prison to become the father and first president of his nation, South Africa.

The great potential power of prisoners is spiritual – a power that is sharpened on the strop of prison privation. Many of the greatest men in history were honed in the school of suffering that only the prison can offer. Most prisoners will lament and quietly cry in their terrible misfortune, but men and women of wisdom and faith will accept their enrollment in this unique school as an opportunity to become something they could have never achieved outside.

The Bible is a unique prison treasure, speaking more clearly to prisoners than to the great majority of people who wander in life outside prison walls. Prisoners who find spiritual power from that great Word do not wander, once they are released. They march with the certainty and cadence of soldiers who know where the real battles are and hurry toward them, for the liberation of their families and their people. The Bible is a prison book, telling of many whose school for greatness was behind cruel bars.

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Joseph, son of Jacob, was one such person, given a life sentence because of a woman's lie. While others swore and languished in prison, Joseph gave his life to serving God by serving his fellow prisoners and the prison authorities. He entered prison as a despised foreigner accused of attempted rape and was called out of prison to become the most powerful man of Egypt, after the pharaoh himself (Genesis chapters 37-50).

Saul, also called Paul, was a frequent inhabitant of Roman prisons. In chains, he wrote some of his greatest Epistles, treasures of New Testament revelation. He proudly identified himself as a "prisoner of Jesus Christ." At the end of his last imprisonment, he was led to a heavy sword that severed his great head from his well-worn missionary body. However, other than Jesus Christ himself, no man in history has had such enduring influence over Christianity as his. In like manner, John the Elder wrote Revelation, the last great book of the Bible, on the Alcatraz of his day, the little island of Patmos. There, he had visions of Jesus Christ and of the climactic events of world history, closing with the words, "So be it. Come, Lord Jesus."

The greatest prisoner of all was Jesus Christ himself. He did not languish for months or years in prison. Beaten nearly to death, he was rushed from prison to a kangaroo court that sent him immediately to the hill called "Skull" (Calvary) where he was brutally nailed to a bloody cross, dying in great anguish. He accepted such a death to free forever those who trust in him for complete forgiveness, pledging their lives to him. At his side on Calvary were two thieves. One, typically, ridiculed Jesus and died in his own darkness of soul. The other prisoner demonstrated more faith than all who were gathered around the cross. The Apostles, Jesus' mother, family members, and followers believed that all was tragically ended at that place and hour. But the bandit who was at Jesus' side said, "Lord, when you receive your kingdom, remember me." Jesus, greatly heartened by such a voice of faith answered, "Today, you shall be with me in Paradise." And, so it was!

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