



THE FIELD IS THE WORLD

The Skinner Family Prayer Letter

The ministry newsletter of Mike and Cindy Skinner, serving with



Dear Family and Friends:

I love all of the Bible, because it's all God's Word. It all reveals Christ to me. But I have to admit that some passages (Romans 8) and some books (Philippians) are especially dear to me. The theme of the Philippiian letter has to do with **joy**. You might marvel along with me when you think about how it was written from a Roman prison. **I like to read about joy and victory over circumstances.** I think I'm also not alone when I have to admit I prefer to claim promises like the ones that say I am a "super-conqueror" who can't be separated from His love over the ones promising that I'll suffer during this present time, *groaning* through trouble, distress, persecution and peril.

I won't try to pretend that I've had to endure suffering or persecution. (Especially compared to the Apostle Paul—or even some of today's believers we serve.) But one thing I *can* identify with the Apostle Paul about is the joy he shared with the Philippians. They were *Macedonians*. As in, "the Macedonian call," ("Come over to Macedonia and help us!"), the way the Holy Spirit sent the Apostle Paul to Europe after forbidding him to preach in Asia minor. (Acts 16:6-9) His ministry there was fruitful, but Paul confessed to restlessness, trouble, "fightings and fears." (2 Corinthians 7:5) If there was that kind of opposition, some of you might already be thinking, "he was on to something!" So what was the result of his work there?

The Macedonians (2 Cor. 11:8-10)—**and particularly the Philippians** (Phil. 4:15)—**became Paul's ministry partners.** (Ph. 1:5). They supported his work in Corinth and even sent a contribution back to Jerusalem for impoverished pioneer believers there. (Rom. 15:26) It may begin to sound as if Paul had found some very prosperous pagans to convert to Christianity—*until you read 2 Corinthians 8 and 9*. The truth is, these new believers did not give out of their abundance of material wealth. They gave out of the *abundance of their joy* and out of "deep poverty." *Beyond their ability*, they gave, begging "with much urging" that Paul accept their gift. (2 Corinthians 8:1-5)

These are the friends about whom Paul brags to the Corinthians. These are the ones he promises God will "supply all your needs," (Ph. 4:19), and whom he uses as an example to others of how God does supply so that resources for sowing, and thanksgiving result. (2 Cor. 9:8-11)

Despite my painfully-obvious *lack* of resemblance to the Apostle Paul, that is something I have experienced. During my trip to California last week, I was reunited with precious saints who have "addicted themselves" to the support of our ministry. We look at their circumstances and try to *talk them out* of their contributions. We can't do it. They've already given themselves to God before giving their contributions.

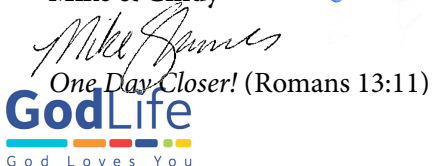
I will say this: knowing we have individuals like this behind us does something more for us than the investment alone would do. We're moving into our second decade of partnership with some of these dear brothers and sisters. And as I confessed in one of my meetings there, **it's beyond our power to adequately thank people who literally make it possible for us to fulfill God's call on our lives. What I can do is to pass on an eloquently-expressed thanks from a contact in another country:**

"I just wanted to say that it is a truly beautiful gift you are giving us with these 30 day guide. Thank you so very much. I've learnt so much so far and I'm consequently feeling stronger in my faith. In the world we live today, nothing is ever free...you're asked to subscribe to this and sign up for that, pay through the nose etc so you become a cynic. But your guide is indeed free, with no strings, yet the gift is worth more than any price on earth you can put on it. When I think about what you're giving us, I'm stunned and extremely grateful to you and to God for working through you to show his love for us. And for reassuring me that true goodness is still out there with the light of Jesus shining bright. May God continue to bless you and yours in abundance."

I can't improve on that! Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts! Happy Thanksgiving to you and yours!

Love, in Christ,
Mike & Cindy

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