



When we read headlines about people groups being persecuted for their faith, it may seem—at first glance—that there is nothing we can do. After all, in many cases, we live thousands of miles away and we often feel over-extended in just managing our own families and responsibilities. Nevertheless, our hearts yearn for a way to ease the hardship of Christians who are discriminated against, harassed, unjustly arrested, beaten, imprisoned or even killed by regimes *who oppose Jesus Christ*.

Fortunately, the Bible provides us with fitting examples of how Christians can make a difference for persecuted believers. One of the most powerful ways to support Christians facing hardship, of course, is prayer.

In Ephesians 6:18, for example, Paul instructs believers to be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people. In the next 2 verses, Paul requests more specific prayer for himself as he faces persecution. “Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.”

In this passage and in many other places, we find the Bible offers practical insight for how to pray for those facing persecution including these five compiled below.

1. Pray that whatever their circumstances, God will give persecuted Christians the right words.

In Ephesians 6:19-20, Paul asks fellow believers to “Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.”



2. Pray that persecuted Christians will understand and find peace in the sufficiency of God’s grace, even in their weaknesses.

While facing physical threat, especially, Christians may be put into scenarios where they must make instantaneous choices under great pressure. For this reason, we pray for the [persecuted church](#) to understand the promises of 2 Corinthians 12:9 which says, “‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

3. Pray that Christians facing hardship will draw from a source of power larger than themselves.

[Christians facing persecution](#) often have very little control over their lives, including their own safety and health. They often battle against government accusers that do not provide them the right to a fair trial

or representation. Because of this, it is critical to pray that believers in trying circumstances are able to see, like Paul, that their hardship helps them rely on a God who is far more powerful than them.

“For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death.” Paul said in 2 Corinthians 1:7-9, “But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.”



4. Pray God would be present with persecuted Christians in their hardship, protecting them according to His will.

In Matthew 26:39, Jesus Himself faced an unjust trial. He prayed, “My Father, if it is possible let this cup pass from me,” which is the first part of his prayer that inspires us to ask God to deliver persecuted Christians from harm. At the same time, the second part of Jesus’ prayer goes hand-in-hand with praying this request. “Yet not my will, but yours be done.” Part of our prayer can be that God will deliver Christians from chains, as he did for Peter in Acts 12. But we also pray that if God does not see fit to supernaturally intervene in such a way, that we will intervene to strengthen these believers no matter the outcome.

5. Pray their witness would inspire those who seek to harm them.

In Luke 6:27-31, the apostle said, “But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.” When Christians are able to maintain perspective like this, their actions are often noticed by those who persecute them. In the case of Paul and Silas, in Acts 16:25, their behavior—praying and singing and praise in the face of hardship—were observed by both their jailers and other prisoners. In acting out of faith despite their circumstances, they were able to share the gospel with their captors in an opportune moment, and the jailer and his family came to believe, as well (Acts 16:34).

