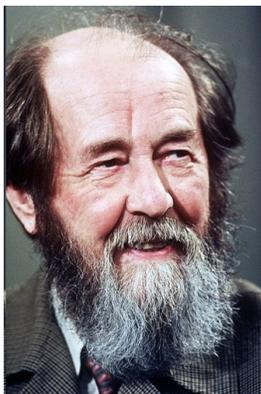


ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF IVAN DENISOVICH

by Alexander Solzhenitsyn



THE AUTHOR

Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1918-2008) was born one year after the Bolshevik Revolution. His father died in a hunting accident before the birth of his son, but his mother valued education and Alexander was a good student. He majored in mathematics at Rostov University, but also took literature correspondence courses at Moscow State University. He served as an artillery captain during World War II, for which he was decorated twice, but was arrested near the end of the war when authorities read a personal letter he wrote to a friend criticizing the Stalin regime. He then served eight years in various prison camps much like the one pictured in his first novel, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. After Stalin died, he was readmitted to Soviet society and became a high school teacher of mathematics while also pursuing his love for writing. The publication of his first novel, the first Russian book to speak of the labor camps, made him famous. His work was suppressed after Khrushchev fell from power, but he continued writing, smuggling his works out of the country so they could be published abroad. These included *Cancer Ward* (1968), again based on his experience in a Soviet hospital, *August 1914* (1971), and *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973-5), among many others. The last of these led to his arrest for treason and exile from the country. Ultimately he settled in Vermont, where he continued to write. In 1978 he delivered the commencement address at Harvard University, in which he rebuked Americans for their spiritual weakness and materialism. After the fall of the Soviet Union he returned to Russia, living outside Moscow until his death from a heart attack in 2008. There he became a vocal critic of the Western emphasis on personal autonomy and the moral weakness of popular culture while also speaking out against the totalitarian tendencies of Vladimir Putin. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1970.

Solzhenitsyn was raised in the Russian Orthodox Church, but during his early adult years accepted without question the dogma of the Soviet state. Only when that state imprisoned him and condemned him afterward to external exile did he become critical of the society in which he lived and turn to a profession of Christian faith. He ultimately concluded that the entire history of terrible suffering in Russia in the twentieth century occurred because “men had forgotten God.”

One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich (1962), largely autobiographical in content, was Solzhenitsyn's first book, written when he was still an obscure teacher of mathematics. The short novel narrates a normal day in the life of a labor camp inmate serving a ten-year sentence after being accused of spying for the Germans in World War II simply because he had briefly been captured and had quickly escaped. It was initially published in a Soviet magazine after being turned down by many editors because of its explosive content. In fact, the editor of *Novy Mir*, the periodical in which it first saw the light of day, took the precaution of asking the permission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, which gave its approval only after the book had been read by Premier Nikita Khrushchev himself. Khrushchev, who was trying to reduce the power of the Stalinist old guard, was happy to see this powerful critique of the Stalin regime roll off the presses. All copies of the magazine were snapped up on the first day and Solzhenitsyn became an immediate sensation; copies were even provided free of charge to thousands of high-ranking Party members. [NOTE: This study guide is based on the translation by Ralph Parker.]

PLOT SUMMARY

The year is 1951, and Ivan has served eight years of his ten-year sentence. His day begins when reveille is sounded at 5:00 in the morning. It is still pitch black outside, but he knows the benefits of getting up early; before work begins at 6:30, money can be made serving other prisoners. This morning, however, he doesn't get up right away because he feels feverish. He is also concerned about a rumor that his squad is being transferred to a new project, the "Socialist Way of Life" settlement, where they would have to dig post holes in the frozen ground and put up barbed-wire fences before building the structures, and thus would have no place to get warm in the frigid weather for at least a month. Ivan's squad leader will try to bribe the officer making the assignments with a pound of salt pork to send some other squad into the middle of the frozen steppe. Within a few minutes, though, a camp guard known as the Tartar roughly pulls off Ivan's covers and announces that he will receive three days' penalty with work for failing to get out of bed at reveille. He actually makes out well, however, when the Tartar takes him to the guardroom and orders him to scrub the floor; indoor duty is almost always preferable to anything outside. As he works, he begins to feel better.

Meanwhile, outside several of the squad leaders are gathered around the camp thermometer, hoping against hope that the temperature will be colder than -41° because below that temperature no one is assigned to work outside. It only reads -17° , however, but they suspect that the thermometer is defective. Ivan fetches icy-cold water from the well, makes sure every inch of the floor is wet, then runs to the mess hall, where he partakes of stew made from rotten fish mixed with boiled black cabbage followed by congealed oatmeal, which had been saved for him by Fetiukov, the lowest member of the squad. The prisoners are only given ten minutes to eat breakfast, which is twice the amount of time they get for dinner or supper.

After breakfast he goes to the dispensary, passing up an opportunity to buy tobacco from a friend in Barracks 7. The orderly, who is busy copying a poem, tells him he should have reported his sickness the night before, but Ivan replies that he didn't feel sick then. He hopes to be confined to bed for a few weeks, but knows that the new doctor believes that work is the best medicine. His temperature isn't high enough to exempt him from work, so when roll call sounds he heads for his barracks.

When he gets there Pavlo, the deputy squad leader, gives him his daily ration of bread and sugar, which is always short. He hides half of the bread in his mattress and puts the other half in his

pocket. One of his barracks-mates, Alyosha the Baptist, is reading his contraband Bible, a New Testament that he has copied out by hand and concealed in a crevice in the wall; that morning he is reading I Peter 4:15-16. When Ivan finishes dressing for work, Tiurin the squad leader summons them for roll call; he has obviously been successful in bribing the officers to keep his squad on its usual detail. Before going out to work, the prisoners are frisked by the guards to make sure they are not carrying or wearing anything unauthorized. When Buinovsky, a former naval commander, complains that by stripping the men outside in the cold, the guards are not behaving like good communists, he is sentenced to ten days in the guardhouse. As they leave the camp for their work detail, the men are counted six or seven times to ensure that no one is missing.

Ivan's squad then marches toward the power station, their assigned place of work. They are forbidden to speak and told that one step to the right or left is considered an attempt to escape, for which they can be shot without warning. As he marches, Ivan thinks of his family at home. He had left for the war in 1941, but rarely exchanged letters; the ones he sent were censored and the ones he received from his wife had no news worth reporting other than that most of the men who survived the war are making plenty of money painting cheap carpets for sale while the women do the work on the farms. His wife hopes he will take up carpet painting as well, but he would rather pursue an honest trade.

The sun rises just as they arrive at the gates of the power plant. As they enter at 8:00 they are counted again and quickly scatter to their designated places. While they wait for their work assignment, Ivan nibbles at the bread he put in his pocket. Fetiukov gathers cigarette butts, Alyosha prays, and other men long for a snowstorm, when the men are confined to their barracks for fear of escape attempts; they hope for the break in routine despite the fact that food rarely got through during a storm and work days missed had to be made up on Sundays. Soon Tiurin enters and gives the men their jobs for the day. Ivan and a Lett named Johann Kilgas, the best workers in the squad, are given the task of boarding up the windows in the machine room so the mortar and the workers can be kept warm. They cross the building site to scrounge some roofing felt to cover the windows. When they get back, Ivan works on repairing the stove, Kilgas repairs the trough for mixing mortar, and Tiurin goes to turn in a work report. The job of the squad leader was to falsify the work report to show that more work had been done than had actually been accomplished, using bribery if necessary. The squad benefitted from this with a little extra food, as did the camp, which then turned in the reports and in the process received more money from the government with which to pay their brutal guards.

As the day progresses, the men work together, using their ingenuity to accomplish the work with inadequate materials and virtually no machinery, though some frequently take breaks near the makeshift stove to warm themselves in the frigid weather. While the men warm themselves by the stove before dinner, the others mock Ivan because his term, unlike theirs, is almost finished. He knows, however, that sentences are as flexible as the government chooses to make them. After all, he had confessed to treason; he had been captured by the Germans during the war and had escaped a few days later, but the Soviets had arrested him under the assumption that anyone who had escaped must have been released to spy on his own people. Given the choice of execution or imprisonment, Ivan had confessed, though he had no idea in what German plot he was supposed to be involved, and had been given a ten-year sentence, eight years of which he had now served, seven of them in a forest work camp gathering wood. As they sit around the fire, they discuss two recent murders of squealers, prisoners who had reported their companions to the authorities, in the middle of the night.

At dinnertime the men go to a nearby shack that served as a canteen. They have to wait in line in the cold, as the canteen cannot accommodate all the men working at the power plant. Anyone

who helps in the process of food preparation or cleaning up gets an extra portion of oatmeal and grits, as do the guards and officers, of course. By the time all those with soft jobs have taken their cuts, precious little is left for the prisoners who do the actual work. Ivan manages to sneak an extra two bowls of food for his squad; Pavlo gives him one of them, gives the other to Buinovsky, then orders Ivan to take Tsezar's bowl to him in the office, where he is busy discussing Russian cinema with other office workers.

Ivan then returns to work, where everyone is seated around the stove. They are in a good mood because the squad leader succeeded in falsifying the work report despite the fact that the squad had actually accomplished nothing other than providing for their own minimal comforts. Tiurin was telling the squad about his past; he had been thrown out of the army because his parents were kulaks (moderately wealthy peasants who were automatically considered enemies of the people by the Soviets, who had exterminated most of them). He later discovered, much to his satisfaction, that the men responsible for drumming him out of the army had themselves been shot in the Stalinist purges in 1937.

When they get back to work laying block, Ivan and his friend Kilgas tease one another about being Stakhanovites - men designated Heroes of Labor by the Soviets for producing far beyond their quotas. Ivan realizes that the masons who had worked on the wall earlier had done a sloppy job, so he calculates what will be needed to correct their errors. He works fast to keep the mortar from freezing. Soon a building foreman named Der arrives on the site and threatens to extend Tiurin's sentence for taking felt to cover the open window, but the members of the squad threaten to push Der off the building if he so much as utters a word, at which point he humbly goes about his business. By sunset the squad has finished laying five rows of bricks, and they rush to use the rest of the mortar before turning in their tools. They run to the gates to get there in time, but are delayed when the prisoner count comes out wrong twice. Finally the guards find a man who had fallen asleep in the building, the count is taken twice more, and the men are allowed to return to the camp, though by now much of their evening has been wasted.

Because the guards kept them so long at the building site, the prisoners move as slowly as possible back to the camp to make the guards wait for their supper as well. As they draw closer, however, they see another squad in the distance and begin to run to try to beat them back to camp. They manage to arrive first, but Ivan realizes that he still has a piece of hacksaw blade he picked up at the power plant. If he is caught with it he could get nine days in the cells, but he successfully conceals it from the guards. He rushes straight to the parcel office to save a place in line for Tsezar, who often gets parcels from home. While there he hears that the prisoners were going to have to work another Sunday; no surprise, but disappointing nonetheless. For his trouble Tsezar gives him his dinner - a bowl of thin cabbage stew. Ivan gets his bread from his bunk and makes it to the canteen on time and makes sure he gets the best bowl of stew, one that actually contains more than broth. Because he enjoys a double helping of stew, he decides to save his bread for the next day.

After supper he goes to Barracks 7 to buy some tobacco from a Lett there, then returns to his own barracks to give Tsezar his bread and get his share of the parcel for which he stood in line. Tsezar, however, gives him the bread instead of any of the delicacies he received from home. Ivan knows that most of the parcel will be given out in bribes to various functionaries anyway to ensure that the next parcel arrives intact. As he settles into his bunk, one of the guards comes through and takes Buinovsky away to the cells for ten days for some obscure infraction of the rules. When another guard summons the men for the evening roll call, Tsezar realizes that he can't take all his food with him, but if he leaves it on his bunk it will be stolen; Ivan advises him to be the last to leave and offers to be the first one back to the barracks so he can protect the contents of the parcel. The

count normally ends around ten o'clock, and reveille sounds at five, so the men rush off to bed. For Ivan it's been a good day - extra food, a hacksaw blade he can make into a knife, and he wasn't in the cells.

While he thinks about the events of the day, Alyosha is across from him praying. Ivan scoffs at him, but the young believer, who has been given twenty-five years simply for being a Christian, tells him that he shouldn't be praying for an extra ration, but for the Lord to remove the anger from his heart. Ivan tells him about an Orthodox priest in his town who enriches himself at the expense of the poor and supports four women with whom he has had relations, but Alyosha says that the man lacks true faith, like the Orthodox Church as a whole, which is why he is not in prison. Ivan responds that he believes in God, but not in heaven or hell. Alyosha says that he should be glad he is in prison where he has time to think of the welfare of his soul, and Ivan wonders if he might not be right, especially since he realizes that the authorities will never let him go home anyway. After another recount, he happily goes to sleep, preparing for another day.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

- Ivan Denisovich Shukhov - The central figure in the story is a political prisoner in a Soviet labor camp in Siberia.
- Andrei Tiurin - Ivan's squad leader is a veteran of camp life who takes good care of his men.
- Pavlo - The deputy squad leader in Ivan's Squad 104.
- Alyosha - A devout Baptist prisoner who seems not to be bothered by the hardships of prison camp life.
- Johann Kilgas - A prisoner from Latvia, he is a good worker and a jokester who is liked by all.
- Fetiukov - The lowest-ranking member of the 104th, he is untrustworthy and always involved in one scheme or another.
- Buinovsky - A former sea captain who has trouble remembering that he is no longer in charge and able to give orders.
- Tsezar - An inmate from a wealthy family, he often receives food packages from home. He is well-educated and loves to discuss matters of philosophy and culture with Buinovsky.

NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

“Work was like a stick. It had two ends. When you worked for the knowing you gave them quality; when you worked for a fool you simply gave him eyewash.” (p.26)

“How can you expect a man who's warm to understand a man who's cold?” (p.34)

“During his years in prisons and camps he’s lost the habit of planning for the next day, for a year ahead, for supporting his family. The authorities did his thinking for him about everything - it was somehow easier that way.” (p.50)

“Alyosha, who was standing next to Shukhov, gazed at the sun and looked happy, a smile on his lips. What had he to be happy about? His cheeks were sunken, he lived strictly on his rations, he earned nothing. He spent all his Sundays muttering with the other Baptists. He shed the hardships of camp life like water off a duck’s back.” (p.51)

“Old-timers, maybe, but since their day a new decree has been passed, and now the sun stands highest at one.” (Buinovsky, p.69)

“So, after all, Creator, You do exist up there in heaven. Your patience is long-suffering but You strike hard.” (Tiurin, p.87)

“Oh Lord, save me! Don’t let them send me to the cells.” (Ivan, p.122)

“And now Shukhov complained about nothing: neither about the length of his stretch, nor about the length of the day, nor about their swiping another Sunday. This was all he thought about now: we’ll survive. We’ll stick it out, God willing, till it’s over.” (p.136)

“Ivan Denisovich, you shouldn’t pray to get parcels or for extra stew, not for that. Things that man puts a high price on are vile in the eyes of Our Lord. We must pray about things of the spirit - that the Lord Jesus should remove the scum of anger from our hearts.” (Alyosha, p.155)

“Why do you want freedom? In freedom your last grain of faith will be choked with weeds. You should rejoice that you’re in prison. Here you have time to think about your soul.” (Alyosha, p.156)

“You see, Alyosha, somehow it works out all right for you: Jesus Christ wanted you to sit in prison and so you are - sitting there for His sake. But for whose sake am *I* here? Because we weren’t ready for war in forty-one? For that? But was that *my* fault?” (Ivan, p.157)

“Shukhov went to sleep fully content. He’d had many strokes of luck that day: they hadn’t put him in the cells; they hadn’t sent his squad to the settlement; he’d swiped a bowl of kasha at dinner; the squad leader had fixed the rates well; he’d built a wall and enjoyed doing it; he’d smuggled that bit of hacksaw blade through; he’d earned a favor from Tsezar that evening; he’d bought that tobacco. And he hadn’t fallen ill. He’d got over it.

A day without a dark cloud. Almost a happy day.

There were three thousand six hundred and fifty-three days like that in his stretch. From the first clang of the rail to the last clang of the rail.

Three thousand six hundred and fifty-three days.

The three extra days were for leap years.” (p.159-160)

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. The title character in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* is based on the experiences of the author in a Soviet labor camp. For Solzhenitsyn, his eight years in the camps was a life-transforming experience, both politically and spiritually. How does the novel reflect the political transformation of the author? Be sure to cite specific details in your analysis.
2. The title character in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* is based on the experiences of the author in a Soviet labor camp. For Solzhenitsyn, his eight years in the camps was a life-transforming experience, both politically and spiritually. How does the novel reflect the spiritual transformation of the author? Be sure to cite specific details in your analysis.
3. The major characters in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* have unique qualities that make them stand out as individuals. Many of them contrast in different ways with the protagonist. Choose one of these characters and discuss how he serves as a foil for Shukhov, bringing out salient aspects of his personality.
4. Analyze the conversation between the protagonist and Alyosha near the end of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. How does this conversation hint at the change toward which Shukhov is moving? What values and priorities are likely to be altered by the influence of his bunkmate?
5. In Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, to what extent should Alyosha be viewed as a Christ-figure? What qualities does he possess that make him like the Savior he worships? How do these distinguish him from the other prisoners? In what ways does his manner of life serve as a testimony to those around him?
6. To what extent is the protagonist of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* an admirable character? As he resists the depersonalizing system of the labor camp, are his actions moral ones? Why or why not? Be sure to cite specifics in your assessment.
7. The issue of doing immoral deeds like lying and stealing in the context of an unjust system has long been a matter of controversy. Discuss the question in the light of Ivan's behavior in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. Are his acts of deception and theft justifiable? Why or why not? Use Scripture to support your conclusions.
8. Compare and contrast the repressive environments portrayed in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and George Orwell's *1984*, both of which are descriptions of the same repressive society. What difference does it make that one author is critiquing the system from the inside while the other is looking in from outside and expanding the portrayal to a worldwide dystopia?

9. Both Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and George Orwell's *1984* are critiques of repressive Communist societies. Compare and contrast the two protagonists in their responses to the societies in which they live. Be sure to address the characters of their rebellions as well as their consequences.
10. One characteristic that repressive societies have in common is the lack of personal privacy. Both Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and George Orwell's *1984* portray extreme environments where privacy is nonexistent. What consequences does such an environment have on those subjected to it? How are the effects of constant observation by the authorities manifested in the lives of the two protagonists? Which deals with the intrusiveness of the authorities more effectively? Why do you think so? Be sure to include evidence from both novels in your discussion.
11. In Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, the playwright gives us the ineffectual revolutionary intellectual Trofimov, who is full of radical ideas but totally unable to put them into action. Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* provides a picture of what happened when such a system was actually put into place. Compare and Contrast Trofimov's concept of a socialist society with the one actually brought about by Lenin and Stalin and portrayed in Solzhenitsyn's novel.
12. Both Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* deal with the horrific aftermaths of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Both were written under the regime of Nikita Khrushchev, but the former was published and openly promoted by the government while the latter was banned. Compare and contrast the two pictures of the post-revolutionary Soviet Union and offer an opinion, supported by evidence from the books, as to why the official reactions to the two novels were so different.
13. In Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, the prisoners in the labor camp are subject to constant physical discomforts and deprivations. How do these affect their emotional and spiritual states? Choose three characters in the novel and discuss how they are affected by the physical environment in which they are forced to live.
14. In Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, to what extent is the labor camp portrayed in the novel distinct from the society that produced it. Is the author critiquing the atrocities of the gulags set up by Joseph Stalin, or is he really suggesting that the entire Soviet system is like the prison camp in which the protagonist lives? In what ways was the environment in the camp similar to that of Russia as a whole under Communist rule?
15. In Matthew 22:21, Jesus says, "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." How is this distinction illustrated in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by the characters of Tsezar (the Russian form of Caesar) and Alyosha? To what extent is Solzhenitsyn's message the same as that of Jesus?

16. To what extent is the protagonist in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* intended to portray an Everyman? Ivan, the Russian form of John, is a very common name. Does the author intend him to stand out from the society around him or to represent it? Support your conclusion with specifics from the novel.
17. Despite the fact that the protagonist in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* is in a labor camp for treason against the state, in many ways he is the ideal of the Soviet worker. What qualities that he manifests correspond with the type of worker that Marxists were trying to produce? Be sure to consider not only his work habits, but also his relationship to the authorities, his fellow workers, his family, and God.
18. In theory, Marxism valued the community over the individual and did everything possible to discourage any signs of individualism. Ironically, however, the attempts to stifle individualism only made people more selfish as they sought to meet their own needs in an environment in which no one else cared whether they lived or died. How is this paradoxical relationship between corporate and individual values illustrated in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*? Choose three characters and discuss how the enforced suppression of individuality only serves to make them more selfish than they otherwise might be.
19. In theory, Marxism valued the community over the individual and sought to create workers who would labor, not for themselves, but for the common good. Ironically, such an effort only made people more selfish and more preoccupied with meeting their own needs in a hostile society. How is this problem illustrated in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*? In what ways does the author suggest that the only force that motivates people to work for the good of others rather than themselves is Christianity, which the Communists tried desperately to repress?
20. Russian journalist Vitaly Korotich said of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, "The Soviet Union was destroyed by information, only information. And this wave started from Solzhenitsyn's *One Day*." What about this little book caused it to have such a great impact that a newspaper reporter in modern Russia would give it credit for bringing down the Soviet Union? Be sure to cite specifics from the novel in your answer.
21. Reviewer Robert Gray revealed that Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* was his favorite book because, among other things, it celebrated "the adaptability and resilience of the human spirit." Discuss his assessment and provide evidence supporting his main reason for appreciating Solzhenitsyn's novel.
22. In Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, the protagonist has decided not to communicate with his family. Why has he made this choice? Is it a wise one? Why or why not? Be sure to consider both the impact on Ivan and that on his wife and daughters.

23. Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* pictures a life in a labor camp where the authorities can be as arbitrary as they please, punishing and abusing the prisoners at will for any or no reason. In this environment, the prisoners develop their own moral codes by which they live. Choose three characters from the novel, summarize the codes by which they govern their lives, and evaluate these codes on the basis of Scripture.
24. In Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, the prisoners deceive and work around the authorities in a variety of ways, but no suggestion is ever made of two of the staples of prison novels - escape or forcible revolt. Why might this be? Consider the nature of the authorities, the characteristics of the prisoners, and the environment of the labor camp in answering the question.
25. In 1978, Alexander Solzhenitsyn delivered the commencement speech at Harvard University. In it he criticized the moral weakness of the Western world, which he saw moving increasingly in the direction of evil. He said, "This tilt of freedom toward evil has come about gradually, but it evidently stems from a humanistic and benevolent concept according to which man - the master of the world - does not bear any evil within himself, and all the defects of life are caused by misguided social systems, which must therefore be corrected." How is his implied view of human nature brought out in his first great novel, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*? How does he show that evil lies not in some amorphous social system, but in the very hearts of human beings?
26. A number of characters in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* make reference to or cry out to God during the course of the narrative. With the exception of Alyosha, who is truly devout, what role does God play in the lives of the men in the camp? Be sure to deal with the protagonist, but also consider characters like the squad leader Tiurin in your analysis.
27. Discuss the closing words of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. What does the fact that he considered the day described in the book to be "almost a good day" tell you about both his circumstances and his attitude toward those circumstances?