



Paul's Passionate Prayers
"Prayer for Love, Knowledge and Discernment"
Philippians 1:9-11

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The depth of our daily prayers is equal to our knowledge of God and our spiritual concern for those for whom we are praying.

- True praying in the Holy Spirit is not a mental exercise in which we verbally express the desires of our heart for ourselves and for those we love.

- True praying in the Holy Spirit is the overflow of our souls for God and for those for whom we are praying.

The depth of our prayers is also equal to our intimacy with God.

- The more intimate we are with God through prayer, the more we can see this world through His eyes, and therefore, the actual needs of those for whom we are praying.

The more we know and understand God's will for all mankind, the better we are able to see the true needs of those on our prayer list. Regardless of their life's circumstances, our ultimate desire is for them to be living in obedience to God's will as men, women, husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, and children.

- Rather than praying for God to do this or that or provide this or that for those we love, we need to take the time to see what God is already doing in their lives through those needs, and then unite with Him in prayer, to draw them to see their need for Him, for apart from their relationship with Him, they will never be satisfied in this life.

Philippians is one of the four "Prison Epistles," which the Apostle Paul wrote in AD 60-62 while he was in prison in Rome.

- Philippi was a very wealthy and influential Roman colony which was on the Egnatian Way, a major trade route connecting the Aegean and Adriatic Seas.
- The Apostle Paul planted the first Christian Church in Europe in the home of a wealthy woman named Lydia, who received Jesus Christ as her Savior and Lord under Paul's ministry.
- Even though he was with them for only a short time, this church remained dear to Paul's heart.
- The church at Philippi sent Epaphroditus to visit the Apostle Paul while he was in prison in Rome, not only to let him know how the church was doing but also to give him a financial gift from the church family.
- Paul wrote this letter to express his thanks for their partnership in his ministry, to express his pride in them as believers, and to exhort them toward unity and holiness.
- In Chapter 1:1-11, the Apostle included the words of his prayer for the church at Philippi:

- Verses 9-11 – ***"And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."***

Paul was not only a great Apostle, taking the gospel into areas where the people had never heard of Jesus, but he was also a great expository teacher of the Holy Scriptures, a great supporter of pastors, and a great prayer warrior.

- Paul prayed that the doctrinal truths he had taught, by the power of the Holy Spirit, would be accepted and embraced by those who had heard him teach.
- Therefore, his prayers were packed with doctrine, truth, and his pastoral love for the church.

In verse 3, Paul said, ***"I thank God upon my every remembrance of you."***

- Paul could look back and gush with gratitude for what the Philippian church had meant to him.

- In verse 5, he calls them partners in the Gospel.
- In verse 7, he says, ***“I hold you in my heart.”***
- In verse 8, ***“For God is my witness how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.”***e., as Jesus loves you, so I love you.

Paul’s passion was for those he had led to Christ to become spiritually mature, totally devoted disciples of Christ so that, they could live every day of their lives to the glory and praise of God.

- ***“Idleness,”*** the writer of Proverbs 16:27 warns us, ***“is the devil’s workshop.”***
- When a Christian loses focus on their main purpose in life, which is to glorify God and praise Him forever, Satan is, then, allowed to fill that time with the pursuit of the useless.
- Paul prayed for the people in the church at Philippi:
 - ***“That you love may abound still more and more”*** – the word “abound” means to excel or to strive for more.
 - Paul was confident that God would finish the work He had started in them, i.e., their eternal salvation, but it would be accomplished through their straining and pressing forth toward that high calling.
 - Paul prayed that their love for God and for others would expand: that they would be filled more and more and more with love and love:
 - ***“In Knowledge”*** – Paul understood that knowledge, even the knowledge of God, without love, is dangerous. Paul knew one can’t have love for God without the knowledge of God, and one would not desire to know God unless they loved Him, so he prayed for them to abound in their love for their knowledge of God.
 - ***“In Discernment”*** – Discernment is applied knowledge. Discernment is putting knowledge into action. Those with discernment know the ways of the Lord, for they are right.
- Putting that prayer together, Paul prayed for the Christians in Philippi that they would develop a deeper knowledge of God that would deepen their love for God, and for others, and that the mixture of both knowledge and love would give them the spirit of discernment to make wise decisions about the issues of life.

Why would Paul pray that God would pour out His blessings on those he loved with a greater level of love, knowledge, and discernment? He gave us two reasons in verses 10-11:

- ***“That you may approve the things that are excellent.”***
 - Discernment is the ability to distinguish between right and wrong to determine those things we need to invest our time in and those things we need to avoid.
- ***“That you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”***
 - Paul wanted the Christians at Philippi to think about that day when every believer will stand before the

Judgment Seat of Christ.

- Paul said he wanted those who had come to faith under his ministry to ***“be filled with the fruits of the righteousness of Jesus Christ; to have lived their lives to the glory and praise of God.”***
- Paul prayed that God’s people would love God more as they come to know Him better and as a result, they would live for Him increasingly, and live for what is vital and good, and so bear fruit to God’s glory.