

Philippians 1:9-11 *And this I [Paul] pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.*

I. Introduction

A. This is Paul's prayer (a request that is clearly expressed) for the Philippian church

1. Walk with discerning love exercising good judgement. Paul explains what discernment is:
  - a. Knowledge of God and His Word
  - b. Judgment according to that knowledge
  - c. Approving excellent things. See Philippians 4:8
  - d. Sincerity, no hidden motives
  - e. Unoffensive, kind words, patient, no secret communications (gossip)

Ephesians 5:8, 10 *For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: ... Proving [carefully testing] what is acceptable unto the Lord.*

2. Discern (see, recognize, & approve) someone or something before committing to it. Consider if Jesus would think of act accordingly.

Philippians 2:5 *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*

B. Gospel of Christ changes everything we do and think

Colossians 3:2 *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.*

II. The Discernment of Love (verse 9)

A. Walk with the mind of Christ. If we don't follow God's instructions (the Bible), we are saying that we know better than Him, that God should follow our way.

1 Corinthians 2:16 *For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.*

B. Excel in Biblical knowledge

1. Based on Truth (the Bible), not men's philosophy.
2. God demonstrated His love for us. He knew what the cost of His love would be.

1 John 4:9-10 *In this was manifested [displayed] the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation [the proper payment] for our sins.*

3. Walk in life with guiding Biblical principles, not with emotional or unguarded love
4. You don't want to make decisions with clouded or angry feelings

C. Excel in discernment

1. Love the Truth
2. Seek & know the Truth, getting God's wisdom from His Word and the Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 2:14-15 *But the natural man [unsaved] receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.*

3. The natural man looks to rationalize their wrong behavior, justify their errors

III. The Deciding of Love (verse 10)

A. Decide what is genuine

1. Example from ancient coins
  - a. Coins were made of gold or silver, soft metals which were easily shaved off around the edges. This would reduce the weight and the value of the coins
  - b. Genuine coin was full-weighted & had its genuine value
  - c. Coin with shaved-off metal edges did not have sufficient metal weight and were not full value

2. Test your love with Biblically guided (genuine) love, not by appearance only, but with full-weighted value

1 Thessalonians 5:21 *Prove [a high-pressure test] all things; hold fast that which is good.*

3. Tests for excellence

2 Timothy 2:15 *Study [God's Word] to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing [discerning] the word of truth.*

- a. Test it by the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 5:9, 10 *For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth; proving what is acceptable unto the Lord*

- b. Test it by Scripture

John 5:39 [Jesus told the Jews in Jerusalem:] *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me..:*

2 Timothy 3:16 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine [Biblical principles], for reproof [to recognise what is wrong], for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

B. Decide what is sincere

1. Testimony of conduct: Sincere, without offense, honest, pure.
2. Testimony of conscience

*2 Corinthians 1:12 For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation [behavior examined] in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward [you Corinthians have seen our consistent behavior even closer].*

3. Testimony of the Commander-in-Chief: Teddy Roosevelt, President of the United States said, "If a man steals for me, then a man will steal from me."

IV. The Delivery of Biblical Love (verse 11)

- A. Product of righteousness: "...being filled with the fruits of righteousness...", the fruit of the inward heart, the 'high-pressure test' of your lifestyle.

*Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness [power under control], temperance [person under control]: against such there is no law.*

- B. Product of a Person: "...which are by Jesus Christ..."

- C. Product of outward action – fruit of changed lives "...unto the glory and praise of God."

*John 15:8 Herein is my [Jesus] Father glorified, that ye [Jesus' disciples] bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*

V. Conclusion

- A. Making right decisions = discernment
- B. Example of a young person deciding on a spouse

*2 Corinthians 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked [tied] together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*