

Series: Divine Joy: A Study of Philippians

C.R. 11-26-17

“ A Joyful Prayer for Progress”

Text: Philippians 1: 9-11

Intro: As we continue in our study of this wonderful letter to the church at Philippi, we truly can see how timeless this letter is. We need these words today as much and more than this church did back then. Paul has started this letter with amazing words of love and commendation toward this church, and today is no different. He will let us in on some of the things that he is praying for, for the church at Philippi. Let's take a look at those today.

1) A Discerning Spirit (v. 9)

- a) He prayed that their love would abound more and more.
- b) I don't think we can ever reach a point where our love is has maxed out.
- c) Note that there is no object to this love. For instance, he did not say your love for God, or for each other.
- d) He was praying that the love they had would overflow up to God and out to each other.
- e) Paul had proof that they loved him, but he wanted them to prove that love to everyone.
- f) There was a whole world of lost people to be loved, even the ones who had persecuted him and come against the church.
- g) He knew that they had to be careful with this love. Knowledge and in all Judgement.
- h) Knowledge=precise knowledge, knowledge acquired by further experience, the result of learning or perceiving.
- i) Judgement= also means perception. Occurs only here in this verse in Scripture. Can be translated “discernment”.
- j) The more that I know Him and the more I grow in Him, the more I will love Him.
- k) Christian love is not being sentimental. It is a love that comes from a work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and the more we are in the Word, and the more we follow the Word, the more we love.
- l) **Phillips:** Nobody ever loved us as God loves us; Calvary is the witness of that. But God's love -vast, eternal, boundless-never violates His holiness, never operates in conflict with His omniscient wisdom, and never ignores His own righteous laws. The fact that God is love and longs for all men to be saved and share His home in Heaven does not mean that there is no Hell.
- m) A parent who loves his child in knowledge and judgment will not give the child everything it wants, and will not withhold rebuke and discipline.
- n) Love stays within the limits of sense.
- o) The Heart and mind must work together when it comes to love.

2) A Determined Stand (v.10)

- a) The word “approve” literally means to assay, examine, test. It is used in reference to testing metals for purity.
- b) Amp: So that you may surely learn to sense what is vital, and approve and prize what is excellent and of real value [recognizing the highest and the best, and distinguishing the moral difference]
- c) Paul is warning us to not just discriminate between good and bad, right and wrong, true and false he also wants us to be able to tell the difference between good and best.
- d) The saying “The good is the enemy of the best” is true.
- e) We are to examine things to see if they pass the test or not.
- f) We must love those who differ from us in their doctrine, but the fact that we love the people does not mean that we approve of what they believe.
- g) We also must not settle for surface, but for the deeper. Approve what is excellent.
- h) Grab hold of what God wants and keep growing and digging. Don’t settle.

3) A Disciplined Struggle (v.10)

- a) The word translated “sincere” means “to be tested by the sunlight”, or to be of “unmixed substance”.
- b) Paul is dealing with two possibilities. 1) To be wrong but sincere. 2) To be right but insincere.
- c) Phillips: A person who is wrong but sincere is deceived; a person who is right but insincere is playing games.
- d) People often say, “It doesn’t matter what you believe as long as you are sincere about it”, but they only apply this to religion.
- e) **Illustrate:** Man taking pills that he sincerely thought were Tylenol. Swallowed both. The same size, shape, color, but they were poison. Would his sincerity save him?
- f) We must understand that being sincere is not enough; we must also be right.
- g) The Bereans in Acts 17:11 wanted to be right, and they won the approval of God as they heard the Apostles preach, they put the words to the test. They searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.
- h) Paul also uses the phrase “without offence”. Being right but insincere.
- i) A hypocrite knows the truth, and professes the truth, but does not practice it. When put in the light his insincerity is revealed.
- j) **Illustrate:** Sculptor who carved too deeply into the marble would put wax in the cut to hide his mistake. Since the wax looked like marble the sculptor could hide the flaw. The customer learned to set the product out in the hot Mediterranean sun and see if the wax melted.
- k) Wise customers learned to write “without wax” into the contracts.
- l) We are to be without wax. Without offence and without stumbling.
- m) We are walking through a minefield and Satan has laid his traps, and our only safety is walking with Jesus, and planting our feet in His footsteps.
- n) Until his return. Till the day of Christ.