

FOR DISCUSSION

1. What kinds of things do you most often pray for yourself? For others?
2. What aspects of praying do you find difficult?

*We might ask why Paul's ministry was so effective? Was it his method? Perhaps in part. Was it his education level? That probably didn't hurt. Was it God's blessing? Definitely. But why did God bless him? No doubt, **BECAUSE OF HIS PRAYERS.***

DIG DEEPER

Read Philippians 1:9

THE PETITION

3. What is the main thing Paul prays for the Philippians?

"And it is my prayer that your _____ may abound more and more..."

4. If Paul had ended his prayer right here, perhaps it would be received well in our culture...
 - a. What are some of the ways love is defined in our culture?
 - b. How does a biblical definition of love (agape) differ from our culture's view of love?
5. With what does Paul pray for the Philippians love to abound?

"...that your love may abound more and more, with _____ & all _____..."

6. What type of knowledge is this? See Jeremiah 9:23-24, Titus 1:1 & John 17:3
7. What result could a lack of the knowledge of God and His Word have on our love for others?
8. Why is discernment added alongside knowledge?
9. Discernment is what moves us into the nitty-gritty application of love in our day to day lives. How might your application of love differ for different people in different circumstances?

Read Philippians 1:10-11a

THE PURPOSES

10. In the NASB translation, the prayer is that their love may abound in knowledge and all discernment so that they may “approve the things that are excellent.” How does this relate to Romans 12:2?

Approve means to test or examine. What are some of the choices in life that should require intense testing or examination for excellence?

11. Sometimes the hardest decisions in life are discerning what is good from what is best. Discerning what is morally excellent and superior will have two results when we stand before Jesus on judgment day: we will stand before him _____ & _____.

We cannot attain this purity and blamelessness on our own. We trust in Christ for salvation and receive His righteousness (justification) and we desire to grow in holiness to become like Him (sanctification). As we walk close to the Lord, we become more sensitive to sin and desire more and more to choose what is best.

12. Through whom does the fruit of righteousness come? What is the fruit of righteousness?

Read Philippians 1:11

THE PRAISE

13. What is the whole goal of our love and growth in Christ-likeness?
14. The Westminster Shorter Catechism states “man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.” Do you see this in Paul’s prayer? Do you desire this in your life?

BRING IT HOME

1. Paul moved from expressing his love for others (last week) to praying for them. Are you expressing your love for others by praying for them? *Choose 3 or 4 people to pray this prayer over this week!*
2. Why must love be rooted in truth? What happens when it’s not? Why must truth be united with love?
3. The day of Christ is mentioned in verse 6 & verse 10. How would our lives change if we lived with Christ’s coming in the forefront of our minds?

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that our love for one another would abound more in knowledge and discernment.
- Pray that we would prioritize what is of greatest importance, grow in purity & blamelessness, and keep the day of Christ’s coming in front of us at all times.
- Pray that we would bear fruit in our lives and so bring glory and praise to God!