

## ***Prayer with a Purpose***

April 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017

### ***Philippians 1:9-11***

#### **Prayer is communication with God.**

- ❖ Prayer is addressing God in faith, believing that He hears us and that He will answer our prayers.

*“And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him.” 1 John 5:14-15*

- The more we know and understand God’s will through our knowledge of His Word, the more accurately we can pray!

*“Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.” Psalm 37:4*

#### **Paul’s prayer for the Christians at Philippi is with purpose and direction!**

Paul prays for God to move in their lives in 5 specific areas:

##### **1. “...that your love may abound more and more...”**

- ❖ Jesus told His disciples: *“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:35*

Love: (Greek – Agape) “Christian love, whether exercised toward the brethren, or toward men generally, is not an impulse from the feelings; it does not always run with the natural inclinations, ... love seeks opportunity to do good to ‘all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.’ Gal 6:10. ...”<sup>1</sup>

- ❖ Godly love always requires self-sacrifice!

*“By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.” 1 John 3:16*

*“And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.” Colossians 3:14*

##### **2. “...with knowledge and all discernment...”**

- ❖ A true understanding of love begins with a knowledge of God!

*“I made known to them your Name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.” John 17:26*

*“Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of Him.” 1 John 5:1*

- ❖ Discernment is needed in the application of love!

Discern: (Greek – anakrino) “to distinguish, or separate out so as to investigate ... to examine, scrutinize...”<sup>1</sup>

Misconceptions of love in our culture:

- To be tolerant – accepting and affirming lifestyles and opinions that may differ from the Christian standpoint.
- To have a strong feeling of affection toward another.
- To be sexually attracted to another.
- To be inclusive – embracing all behaviors and lifestyles as valid.

The true concept of love in the Word of God!

*“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.” 1 John 5:3*

**3. “...so that you may approve what is excellent...”**

Excellent: Being of great value or worth, versus things that are menial, poor, bad, ordinary, inferior, unexceptional, or mediocre.

*“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12:1-2*

- ❖ Paul prays that Christians would discern and pursue the things in life that really matter!
  - 2 Peter 1:3-11

**4. “...and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ...”**

Pure: Not contaminated. Not defiled or polluted.

*“For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person.” Matthew 15:19-20*

*“How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your Word.” Psalm 119:9*

Blameless: Without blame. Does not mean to be “perfect”. Responsibility has been taken for faults or shortcomings.

*“Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord!” Psalm 119:1*

*“Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as he is pure.” 1 John 3:2-3*

**5. “...filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”**

- ❖ Jesus revealed how God is glorified in our lives!

*“If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.” John 15:7-8*

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...” Galatians 5:22-23*

*“And **it is my prayer** that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure*

*and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”*  
*Philippians 1:9-11*

Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Vine, W.E. *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words*. Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers, 1997.

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