

## Small Group Discussion Guide — January 26, 2020

- Series: "I Pray That" - Prayers of the Apostle Paul
  - Sermon: The Fruit of Maturity
  - Scripture: Philippians 1:9-11 (NLT and The Message translations)
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### FOLLOW-UP FROM LAST WEEK:

Has the thought of the “dimensions” of God’s love as elaborated in last week’s sermon impacted your prayers this week? If so, how?

### CONNECT:

1. What one thing stood out for you from this weekend’s service?
2. How many ways do we speak about love in this culture? For example, I love my french fries v. I love my favorite sports team vs. I love my spouse? How difficult is it for you to talk about real love?

### ENGAGE:

1. Read Philippians 1: 9-11 (NLT)
  - Why do you think Paul starts with love and speaks of it as overflowing more and more? What happens to our outlook when love is our dominant emotion?
  - Why does Paul include growing in knowledge and understanding along with love? What might love look like without the discernment that comes with growing in knowledge and understanding?
  - What is the fruit of our salvation (v. 11) and how do we recognize it in ourselves?
2. Read Philippians 1: 9-11 (MSG).
  - How do we live a lover’s life, circumspect and exemplary? What does that look like in this culture?
  - How do we produce good fruit from the soul? What is our part in this production and what is God’s part?

### APPLY:

1. How often are your prayers “fix it” prayers? How often is praying a last resort rather than your first thought? Consider how Paul’s prayers differ from your own and think of a couple of changes you can make to pray more like Paul.
2. David said that fear removes life from living. What are your biggest fears? How do they “suck the living” from your life? How does this miss the point of being a follower of Christ, of loving God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength?
3. What are some practical steps we can take this week to shed ourselves of our “fear fruit” and produce the real fruit of God’s love in our life and for others?

### PRAY:

Father, thank you for your overwhelming love for us. Guide us by your Spirit to love like you love, to choke out our “fake fruit” and produce only real fruit. Let us be bountiful so others may see you through us. In your holy name we pray. Amen

## **GOING DEEPER:**

1. Search your bible this week for a couple of helpful verses on the struggle between fear and love and memorize them.
2. David talked about fear producing “fake” fruit in our lives. What other emotions can take our minds captive and produce “fake” fruit? How do we battle those emotions?

### Supporting Verses:

*Friendly reminder: Download one of the Bible apps on your phone or tablet to have quick access to the many different translations of scripture available.*

Philippians 1: 9-11 (The Message)

So this is my prayer: that your love will flourish and that you will not only love much but well.

Learn to love appropriately. You need to use your head and test your feelings 10 so that your love is sincere and intelligent, not sentimental gush. Live a lover’s life, circumspect and exemplary, a life Jesus will be proud of: 11 bountiful in fruits from the soul, making Jesus Christ attractive to all, getting everyone involved in the glory and praise of God.

Matthew 22:36-37

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”

Timothy 1:7

For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

1 Corinthians 13:13

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Psalm 1:3

That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither - whatever they do prospers.

### **Quotes:**

“If what we call love doesn’t take us beyond ourselves, it is not really love. If we have the idea that love is characterized as cautious, wise, sensible, shrewd, and never taken to extremes, we have missed the true meaning. This may describe affection and it may bring us a warm feeling, but it is not a true and accurate description of love.” Oswald Chambers

“In false love your aim is to use the other person to fulfill your happiness. Your love is conditional: You give it only as long as the person is affirming you and meeting your needs. And it’s non-vulnerable: You hold back so that you can cut your losses if necessary. But in true love, your aim is to spend yourself and use yourself for the happiness of the other, because your greatest joy is that person’s joy.” Tim Keller

“This love, this God-given love in Christ, once discovered and grown into - the threats and fears of all the years are stripped of their life stealing terrors – and life begins. The hiding and heartbreak come to love and the ice melts and the wounds slowly mend and green spring begins in the heart.” David Dwight