

A PHILIPPIANS STUDY

DISCUSSION GUIDE

September 24, 2023

PHILIPPIANS (week 3) - Aaron McRae A DYNAMIC & DANGEROUS PRAYER

This Discussion Guide is designed to help you *think more deeply* about the sermon and *engage with others* through thoughtful conversation, biblical exploration and *allow God to work* in your life as you apply what you discover.

➤ CONVERSATION STARTER

Other than the bible, what is your favorite book?

➤ EXPLORATION

This week we continue in Philippians chapter 1 as we focus on Paul's prayer for the church.

Philippians 1:9-11 (From your bible, read aloud)

What stands out to you from these verses?

As we look at this passage bit by bit as we seek to understand the full meaning for the church back then and for us today.

In verse 9, Paul says, "And this is my prayer: that your *love may abound more and more* in knowledge and depth of insight..."

Paul is praying that their love would steadily increase. He is well known for writing about love, but it is interesting to note that Paul speaks very rarely of the love of God, instead he speaks often about how we are to love one another. Apparently the Philippians were loving one another well, because instead of a rebuke or correction, Paul is praying that they would keep

doing it well. His desire seems to be that there would be no limit to their love and that it would continue to grow more and more. This is a dynamic and even dangerous prayer.

A DYNAMIC & DANGEROUS PRAYER

- Abounding in Love +

"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in *knowledge and depth of insight...*"

Uses of 'Knowledge' in New Testament

Knowledge of God = Eph 1:17; Col 1:10

Knowledge of His Son = Eph 4:13; Col 2:2

Knowledge of righteousness = Romans 10:2-4

Knowledge of God's will = Colossians 1:9

Knowledge of sin = Romans 3:20

Knowledge of the truth = 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Tim 2:25

Knowledge of everything good = Philemon 6

Paul is not praying that they would have more information, but that God's love and knowledge would penetrate and saturate every aspect of their lives. Only then will they begin to consistently value what is true and choose what is best.

Paul shows us the progression of love, which incorporates knowledge, insight and discernment and then leads to thinking, feeling, and living according to God's ways.

What is a topic or issue you feel passionately about, but find hard to communicate with love to someone who disagrees?

Philippians 1:10a, **“so that you may be able to discern what is best...”**

The reason for Paul's prayer for them is **so that** they would be able to discern what is best. He doesn't want them to simply believe information and take it at face value, he wants them to be able to test and inspect things to make sure they are true and in line with God's word. He is reminding them to keep doing the work of discernment. Keep studying, keep investigating, keep growing in love and seeking God's best.

Philippians 3:8 (From your bible, read aloud)

Paul is not writing here about being perfect, but about his desire for them to continue to grow in discernment about what truly matters.

How does your relationship with God help you decide what is most important and gets your best attention?

A DYNAMIC & DANGEROUS PRAYER

- Abounding in Love +
- Growing in Discernment +

Practical Illustration: As the holidays approach, there may be time when you gather with people who see the world differently than you. Rather than getting caught in the same old disagreements, what would happen if you asked God to help your love to abound more and more, so that you may be able to discern when to speak up and when to keep quiet?

This is not easy! We need God's help to guide us as we navigate difficult relationships, making sure that we are always motivated by love.

Philippians 1:10, “so that you may be able to discern what is best **and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.**”

Paul is calling the church to be holy and pure in a holistic way; In thought, word and action.

Holy + Holistic = Holystic

A DYNAMIC & DANGEROUS PRAYER

- Abounding in Love +
- Growing in Discernment +
- Living Holistic +

Describe what living a pure and blameless life means to you?

Philippians 1:11, **“filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.”**

This image of fruit takes us back to the Old Testament picture of the “Tree of Life” which provides refreshment and nourishment. It is a tree planted by the river with deep roots and abundant fruit. This metaphor points to the theme that when we live the way Paul is praying, there are real results that we can see.

A DYNAMIC & DANGEROUS PRAYER

- Abounding in Love +
- Growing in Discernment +
- Living Holistic +
- Filled & Fruitful in Jesus

This is a work that God does in us, through Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit. We receive the work of Jesus in our lives, when we allow His Spirit to shape and form us.

Galatians 5:22-23 (From your bible, read aloud)

What are the fruits listed Gal 5:22-23 that you would like to see grow in your life?

Philippians 1:11 (From your bible, read aloud)

The goal of the entire process is that God would get the glory and praise that he deserves. It is only when we grow in love, discernment, holiness and fruitfulness that God's glory is the result of our prayers.

A DYNAMIC & DANGEROUS PRAYER

- Abounding in Love +
- Growing in Discernment +
- Living Holistic +
- Filled & Fruitful in Jesus = _____

The Glory and Praise of God

➤ TAKE AWAY

Take some time to personalize and pray through Philippians 1:9-11 out loud, asking God to answer Paul's prayer in your life this week.