

Growing in Love

During July we are focusing on love in the body. It's the natural progression after spending June examining Ephesians 4 and unity. In this lesson we will focus on Philippians 1.9 and talk about what it means to grow in love. This is in the middle of a section where Paul focuses on the spiritual welfare of the Philippians. What he prays for them in 1.9-11 could be called five building blocks for a successful spiritual life. They are love, excellence, integrity, good works, and glory. Each one builds on the other. They are all built on the foundation of love. Verse 9 is a prayer for our heart. What do we need to know about love?

I. Divine Love

- A. Philippians 1.9: *And I pray this: that your **love** will keep on growing...*
 - 1. The love you possess is a gift of God.
 - 2. Galatians 5:22–23: The fruit of the Spirit is love ... and everything else flows from it.
- B. It is built in. *And I pray this: that your love will keep on **growing**...*
 - 1. It's not a matter of acquiring it ... it's a matter of allowing God to increase it.
 - 2. 1 John 3:14: *We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers and sisters. The one who does not love remains in **death**.*

II. Decisive Love

- A. *Agape* love is in focus. Not a love of impulse or emotion.
 - 1. Divine love is the love of choice or will.
 - 2. Expressed by: Meeting a need; An act of kindness; Humble service to someone else.
- B. It is love in action.
 - 1. 1 Corinthians 13:4–7: *Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not arrogant,⁵ is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not irritable, and does not keep a record of wrongs.⁶ Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth.⁷ It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, **endures** all things.*
 - 2. This is the distinguishing mark
- C. It is the greatest virtue in the Christian life. It is the sum of everything.
 - 1. Romans 13:10: *Love does no wrong to a neighbor. Love, therefore, is the **fulfillment** of the law.*
 - 2. Will we love each other no matter what we do or don't do?
- D. It needs to be dynamic
 - 1. *Your love will **keep on** growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment,*
 - 2. Present tense ... continual progress ... expanding its capacity for more.
 - 3. *Keep on growing in **knowledge**.*

III. Discerning Love

- A. Philippians 1:9: *Your love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of **discernment**,*
 - 1. Insight or perception.
 - 2. It is under the control of a spiritual mind or reason.

IV. As we Close...

- A. We have been called to love each other. This is Paul's prayer.
 - 1. You have been created with an insatiable inner need for meaningful interaction with others.
 - 2. God made us to be fulfilled in this way in the loving environment of the church.
- B. All those that God puts in our path, whatever their need, knowing that we will receive from the Lord by doing what is right. Love.... With the fullest expression.