

Philippians 1:7-11
“Praying with Joy”

Introduction

Paul starts this letter off with mentioning how he prays for them with a joy in his heart.

Phil 1:3-4

3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

4 always in every prayer of mine **making request for you all with joy,**

1:7-8 Paul has a great affection for this church, and is thankful for them standing with him

Phil 1:7-8

7 just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, **inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace.**

8 For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.

A. Paul was very thankful for the Philippi church

1. they stood beside him in his trials for the gospel
2. and they received the same grace that he did

B. Paul held them in a special place in his heart.....and said God is witness

Paul was a man of towering intellect, but he was also a man of great **heart**, and the Philippian Christians were in his **heart**.

He could even call on God to be his **witness** regarding his deep **affection** for them.
 (Guzik)

1:9 Praying that their love continue to grow

Phil 1:9

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,

A. This I pray, that your love may abound still more and more:

The Philippians had a lot of love, and they showed it to Paul. Yet Paul didn't hesitate to pray that their love would **abound still more and more**.

Abound

The Gk. (Perisseuo) - “to exceed a fixed number or measure.”

More and More:

When the words **abound** and **more** appear together, they literally mean “**to super-abound.**”

So, Paul prayed that their love would super-abound, exceed its current measure or as the NLT puts it – “**overflow**”.

Paul tells us, in Romans 5, that as believers we get that Love when we believe:

Rom 5:5b

5b ...the love of God has been poured out (**i.e. flowed in**) in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Paul prayed that the love we got at salvation by the Holy Spirit would now grow in us in an increasing measure!!!

1 Thessalonians 3:12

12 And may the Lord make **you increase and abound in love** to one another and to all.

Did you catch that?

Their love was to flow both "**to one another**", that is, "**to fellow-Christians**", and then "**to all**", that is to "non-Christians".

As Jesus told His disciples

Matthew 10:8 Freely you have received, freely give.

This is why Jesus said

John 13:34

34 "A new commandment I give to you, **that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.**

Then later Jesus said:

John 15:9

9 "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.

Quote: (Anne Graham Lotz; Billy Graham's daughter)

"The first secret to loving others is to immerse yourself in a love relationship with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and abide there."

Trivia point:

Did you know that we are commanded over **50 times** in the New Testament to love others?

Jesus teaches what is the greatest commandment in all the Bible.

Matthew 22:37-40

37... "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

38 "This is the first and great commandment.

39 "And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

B. To love.....“In knowledge and all discernment”:

The word Love by itself and without definition means nothing. It is often just a fanciful feeling or impression of being loving and ends up not really being loving at all.

Example: (The Corinthian church in 1 Cor 5)

In the name of love they were being foolish and immoral.

1 Cor 5:1-2

1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles--**that a man has his father's wife!**

2 And **you are puffed up**, and **have not rather mourned**, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.

It seems that they maybe thought they were living “in grace” and that this action of excepting this marriage was “the loving thing to do” and the way a church should be, but...

He rebuked the Corinthian church that seemed to glory in their **“love” and “openness”** which lacked any sense of **“knowledge and discernment”**.
(Guzik)

Paul explains:

1 Cor 5:6

6 Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

Paul tells them the loving thing to do, is kick him out of church:

1 Cor 5:4-5

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 **deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved** in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Paul gives them knowledge and discernment in how to love such people in the future:

1 Cor 5:9-13

9 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.
10 Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or

with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner--not even to eat with such a person.

12 For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?

13 But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person."

Another Example: (Helping the poor or those in need)

There are many verses in the Bible on helping the poor and needy, especially the orphaned and the widow. In the Bible times the various cultures of the world made it so they had no way to be able to fit into the society and/or be able to work and have a way of living except for begging.

But the Bible also gives us verses that say not every time someone is in need, that means we are to do the providing and in some cases it would be wrong to help in certain cases.

2 Thes 3:10

10 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: **if anyone will not work**, neither shall he eat.

Paul explains a man needs to work and provide for his family and if not...

1 Tim 5:8

8 But **if anyone does not provide for his own**, and **especially for those of his household**, he has denied the faith and **is worse than an unbeliever**.

Paul explains although the church needs to help the widows financially, but not all of them, such as young widows in 1 Tim 5:5,10; a long list of qualifications, and it would hurt them in the long run.

1 Tim 5:11-13

11 But refuse the younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, 12 having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith. 13 And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.

Paul knew the danger of an undiscerning love.

The right love was love that had **knowledge and all discernment**; it was love that could **approve the things that are excellent**.

C. Real or true love, that is love with knowledge and discernment, that kind of love is the greatest part of being a Believer

1. Love is **the proof that we are genuine followers of Jesus**. Jesus said:

John 13:35 (NLT)

35 Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."

The Apostle John wrote in 1 John:

1 John 3:14 (NLT)

14 If we love our Christian brothers and sisters, it proves that we have passed from death to life.

And then in the next chapter,

1 John 4:7

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

2. Love is also **the proof of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives**. Paul wrote:

Galatians 5:22 (NLT)

22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love...

Historical story:

A Christian apologist and historian Tertullian who lived during the 2nd & 3rd centuries wrote that the Roman government was disturbed about the early church and so they sent spies into the Christian gathering and came back with this report:

“These Christians are very strange people. They speak of One by the name of Jesus, who is absent, but whom they seem to be expecting at any time. And, my, how they love Him and how they love one another.”

1:10 This love approves the things that are excellent

Phil 1:10

10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,

A. “that you” or....

The word that could be translated as **“so that”** or **“in order that.”**

B. You may approve:

The Gk. (dokimazo) - to test, examine, prove, scrutinise (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), as metals;
In regard to testing metals, it is the act of testing metals to determine their purity, i.e. such as genuine gold.

This is what knowledge and discernment can do, **to help us determine what things are appropriate and pure.**

C. The things that are excellent

The Gk. (diaphero) - to test and to prove in order to distinguish between good and evil, lawful and unlawful, to approve of things that excel, to differ from one; to excel, surpass one

Quote:

“Good, better, best. Never let it rest. Until good is better and better is best.”

God’s love comes from a purity, that is in the fruitfulness of it.

Paul tells us:

Rom 12:2

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, **that you may prove** what is that **good** and **acceptable** and **perfect** will of God.

We need to learn to put things in life through a sieve or strain of discernment, and the “excellent” things that make it through the sieve or strain are the things that we ought to be incorporating in our relationships with each other. That we might be the kind of people that can truly love one another as Christ has loved us.

D. That you may be sincere

The Gk. (heilikrines) - (“sun” + “judge”) – pure, sincere, unsullied; found pure when unfolded and examined by the **sun’s light**

To judge (krino) by sunlight (heile) - maybe even like holding it up to God's “Son-light” to judge it by. We are to stand the test of judgment in His light

Our English word “sincere”:

Our English word comes from the Latin word “sincerus”, meaning “without wax”. In Roman times, a person bought a piece of pottery after asking if it was “sincere”, or that there was no wax covering up the cracks (which potters would do to sell a piece of cracked pottery). We are to be without wax, without anything covering up our faults

Rom 12:9

9 **Let love be without hypocrisy.** Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.

E. and without offense:

The Gk. (aproskopos)- not causing to stumble; of a smooth road; not leading others to sin by one's mode of life; not stumbling others; to be blameless; without offense.

F. Till the day of Christ

We want to be both **sincere** and **without offense** in God's opinion.

We want to stay in that pattern until the end.

Sometimes it's hard to stay pure just one day, let alone right through to the second coming.

- We can't do it without God's help.
- We need prayer.
- We need to pray for one another.

1:11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness
Phil 1:11

11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

A. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness:being filled

The Gk. (pleroo) - to make full, to fill up, i.e. to fill to the full; to fill to the top: so that nothing shall be wanting to full measure, fill to the brim;

the fruits

The Gk. (karpos) - fruit; that which originates or comes from something, an effect, result

Note: The orange tree does not produce oranges to eat them, but for others to be refreshed and blessed.

righteousness

The Gk. (dikaiosune) - righteousness, the condition acceptable by and to God; integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking, feeling, and acting

- The work of becoming **sincere and without offense** is really God's work within us.
- It happens as we are **filled with the fruits of righteousness**.

B. Let Jesus do the work

- If we're not careful, we can fall into a trap of keeping a list of things we have to do today to be pleasing to God.
- In reality, we simply need to be close to Jesus.

- Jesus wants to do the work in us. The good things that happen in our lives happen as a result of our relationship with Jesus.

John 15:4-5

4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

- Jesus produces the fruit in our lives.

Conclusion
