



# World Christian Fellowship

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## Book of Philippians

### Lesson 2

### Paul's Prayer to Philippians

#### Philippians 1:8-11

V 8, Longing to see them in person

Prayer life of Paul:

Apostle Paul always praying to all the churches planted by him, we could see that clearly in his letters to the churches.

**2 Corinthians 11:28**, *besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.*

From this we can understand that in the midst of all his troubles and trials his focus towards the churches not about himself.

As we have started to study this letter we found that Paul is in prison instead of making a cry for himself or running pity party. He is so concerned and his heart and mind is set upon the welfare of fellow brothers and sisters.

**V: 9-11**, *And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,<sup>10</sup> that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,<sup>11</sup> being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*

From the above prayer we can see that there are four prayer requests were made for the brothers and sisters in church in Philippi.

#### **Four Prayer request for the Philippians.**

- 1. Grow in love**
- 2. Love to be governed by knowledge and discernment**
- 3. Be filled with good fruits**
- 4. Godly living giving Glory to God**

What the prayers offered in modern day churches and the prayers prayed by Apostle Paul were so different. There was no mention about any request upon any of their physical needs. The prayer is focused on their spiritual growth which will manifest in their physical life to glorify God.

## 1. Grow in love

First and foremost prayer request for them is to grow in Love. Even in the Old Covenant they have been commanded to love the Lord and love their neighbour as themselves.

**Deuteronomy 6:4-5,**<sup>4</sup> *“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! 5 **You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.***

**Leviticus 19:18,** *you shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but **you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the Lord.***

When asked about the commandments Jesus summarised the commandments quoting both the Old Testament passage and said it in,

**Mark 12:28-31,** *Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, “Which is the first commandment of all?”<sup>29</sup> Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 And **you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.**’ This is the first commandment. 31 And the second, like it, is this: ‘**You shall love your neighbour as yourself.**’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”*

Paul is praying that the love will be increasing not decreasing. When Apostle Paul prayed for the church in Ephesus he prayed that let them comprehend and increase in the love of God.

**Ephesians 3:14-19**, *For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

The whole chapter of 1 Corinthians talks about love.

### **1 Corinthians 13**

The purpose of the commandment is,

**1 Timothy 1:5**, *Now the **purpose of the commandment is love** from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith,*

**How do we know that you love God?**

By showing love to one another.

**1 John 4: 20-21**, *If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? 21 And this commandment we have from Him: that **he who loves God must love his brother also.***

### **How will the world know that you love God?**

**John 13:34-35**, *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

A growing love for God is seen

2. Psalms 63:1-8, in one's fellowship with God
3. Psalms 119:165, in obedience to God's law (John 14:21),
4. Psalms 31:23, in trusting in His power and sovereignty
5. Psalms 37:4, in a delight and contentment in Him.
6. Philippians 2:1-8, A growing love for one another is visible when one considers others better than him or herself and
7. Luke 10:15-37, when the needs of another, whether friend or foe, are being taken care of.

## 2. Love governed by knowledge and Discernment

Love by itself can be disastrous at times when it's left to flow unchecked and unregulated. Love becomes like hate when it refuses to think. All of us have had experience with people who mean well, but they never bother to get the facts and to see if they can help intelligently, and sometimes they are a great nuisance.

We think of love as being indiscriminating. Discrimination and love seem like opposites. But Paul prays that the Philippians would grow in discerning love.

Love is not blind. It does not close its eyes to reality. It is not a feeling lacking of comfortable. Biblical love is related to true knowledge and it operates with careful discernment.

The word Paul uses which we translate as discern is the Greek '*dokimazein*'. It means to approve or test.

- Immigration officers check passports to make sure they're not fake.
- Banks check paper currency in case it's been forged.
- Employers check degree diplomas to see if they're valid.

All of those procedures could be described by '*dokimazein*'.

In Paul's day the word was used for testing metal, especially coins. Paul's prayer is for discernment, for all things to be tested, so that the Philippians will love only what is best and nothing inferior or false.

In the present day if you are critical of anyone personal life or their doctrine how much ever they are against the scripture, then you are being accused of judging them. They are quick to quote from Jesus,

**Matthew 7:1**, "*Judge not, lest you be judged*" are taken out of context and misapplied. But they fail to read the whole thing.

**Matthew 7:6**, "*Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine*"

Now let me ask you a question, how can you determine if someone is a dog or a swine?

**Matthew 7:15**, "*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.*"

Only a discerning sheep can understand fellow sheep whom to embrace or is it a ravenous wolf to avoid.

Thus biblical love cannot be separated from the true knowledge of God. From the discernment between truth and error that comes from a careful knowledge of Scripture.

### 3. Be Filled with good fruits

The moment we accept and put our trust in Jesus Christ as Saviour, God imputes His righteousness to our account. Thus we have right standing with God.

But the Christian life is a process of growing in righteous character and deeds. As the word “fruit” implies, this is a process, not something instantaneous. In our garden or in the field we plant the seed, prior to that we make sure the soil of the land is prepared and good. Then plant the seed. The process involves watering, manuring, weeding, protecting and finally the harvest.

The word picture also implies that it is the life of Christ working in and through us that produces the fruit (**John 15:1-6**). As we grow in the true knowledge of God and in discernment through His Word, the fruit of the Spirit, whose first characteristic is love, is produced in us.

We will become “zealous for good deeds” (Titus 2:14)

**Galatians 5:22-23**, *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*

## 4. Godly living giving Glory to God

“The difficulty in life is to know on what we ought to concentrate. The whole art of life, I sometimes think, is the art of knowing what to leave out, what to ignore, what to put on one side. How prone we are to dissipate our energies and to waste our time by forgetting what is vital and giving ourselves to second and third rate issues” (*The life of Joy*) by **Martyn Lloyd-Jones**.

First and foremost goal our life should be to giving glory to God in our lives.

It is vital that your focus on life is to love God and others based on true knowledge and discernment. If that is at the centre of your life, everything else will fall into its proper place.

1 Corinthians 10:31, *Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*



As Christians we ought to live in the light of Christ is going to come soon. We all must stand before Him. When you have this thought as the main reason then you won't be living for self-pleasing life but rather live for Christ.

If you realize that today you could be face to face with Christ, it motivates you to godly living, to self-sacrificing love.

**a) Give Prises to God.**

**Psalm 50:23, *Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; And to him who orders his conduct arightl will show the salvation of God.***"

Another best illustration we find in the book of **2 Samuel 12:26-31**. Joab won the victory against Rabbah and got of the enemy's crown in his possession. Joab sent a word to David so that he can present the crown to him. As Christians we

ought to live like this. We will fight and win victory and have the crown in our possession but we don't wear it but to present to our master Jesus Christ, who has won a victory for you.

### **b) Being content**

God promises us to supply all our needs. When we are content, we acknowledge God's sovereignty in our lives, and that gives Him glory.

**Philippians 4:11**, *Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content*

**Romans 8:28**, *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

### **c) Bearing Fruit**

You bear fruit only by abiding in Christ not on your own strength. There are good things and Godly things.

**John 15:8**, *By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.*

**Colossians 1:10**, *that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;*

#### **d) Praying according to His will**

Praying in the name of Jesus means that praying in accordance with His character and His will. And God delights to reveal His glory in answered prayer. That is why He commands us to pray. So God can show us His greatness and we can give Him the praise.

**John 14:13**, *And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

#### **e) Preaching the word of God**

Every one of us have been commanded by Jesus to preach the word either in season or not in in season.

**2 Thessalonians 3:1**, *Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you,*

## Conclusion

Paul gives a valid reason at the end of his prayer, “**to the glory and praise of God.**” Let this be a reminder to all who read this that we are not the centre of the universe.

All that God does and all the prayers He answers are not solely for our benefit (although all His actions and answers to prayer are in our best interest). God is the One deserving all glory and it is to His honour that we do anything.

Paul echoes the prayer of Jesus Christ,

**Matthew 5:16**, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

Peter echoes Paul’s prayer:

**1 Peter 2:12**, *having your conduct honourable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

### **Application for us today:**

1. Do you pray for your spiritual growth? Also, are you praying for the spiritual growth of those within our church? Apart from your prayers and the prayers of others no growth will take place. We must rely on God to accomplish this work in a believer's life. Pray for others and pray for yourself.
2. Is your love rooted in truth? Why must love be rooted in truth? What happens when it's not? Why must truth be coupled with love?
3. We have a lot of cultural ideas about love. Why is it essential to determine what love is from Scripture rather than from our cultural ideas of love?
4. How can we know if we love God (John 14:21, 23; 1 John 5:3)?
5. How can we know if we love others properly (1 Cor. 13:4-7; 1 John 3:16-18; 4:7-21)?

Let this be my prayer for you today,

***1 Peter 4:10-11, <sup>As</sup> each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. <sup>11</sup> If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.***