

Apostolic Prayer #3 - Philippians 1:9-11

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense (blameless in other versions) till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (Phil 1:9-11 NKJV)

Paul is praying that the believers in Philippi would grow in love, knowledge and discernment. He is indicating that when we grow in these things we will have a stronger discernment in approving what is excellent and that will also aid in us being sincere and blameless when we stand before Him.

Out of all of the apostolic prayers this is my favorite one to pray personally. When I look at this prayer I see a progression from love, to knowledge, to discernment, to loving the truth, and then to the final day of standing before Him in confidence at the judgement seat.

THAT YOUR LOVE MAY ABOUND (Phil 1:9)

- We are grateful for whatever the Lord has given us by the Spirit in our life, but we want more and more. No matter how deep we get in the love of God, we want more.
 - When we begin to ask God to regularly touch us and cause our hearts to abound in love it will have an effect in 3 different ways. There is several ways to see how this plays out but I want to highlight 3 ways to pray this over ourselves.
1. ***Revelation of God's love for us:*** We pray for greater understanding of God's love for us. Even in eternity we will never exhaust or fully grasp the fullness of the ocean of God's love. Like what we see here in Ephesians 3...

“that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” (Eph 3:17-19 NKJV)

2. ***Impartation of love for Jesus in us:*** Jesus prayed that the Father would impart His own love for Jesus to His people so that they would love Jesus in the way the Father loves Jesus. This was the ache of Jesus' heart in John 17 just before His trial and death.

“that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” (John 17:26 NKJV)

3. ***Overflow of God’s love for others through us:*** We pray that love will flow through us to others. 1 John makes a bold statement regarding those who walk in the love of Jesus towards others.

“If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.” (1 Jn 4:12 NKJV)

STILL MORE AND MORE (Phil 1:9)

This speaks of love progressively growing in our hearts.

- We are thankful for the current love that we have in our hearts but the cry of Paul’s heart was for it to happen MORE AND MORE. I want to have more love in my heart tonight when I go to bed than when I woke up. And tomorrow I want to wake up with more love in my heart than when I went to bed.

IN KNOWLEDGE (Phil 1:9)

Walking in greater love begins with understanding (knowledge) the truth about God’s personality, the finished work of the cross, Jesus’ leadership, how He views His people, and more.

- This is not about mental or intellectual accent but having a true and tangible experiential knowledge and understanding of God. The knowledge of God is a deep and a never ending ocean full of revelation. When we see the smallest glimpses of who He is we find our hearts becoming more and more free. In John 8 Jesus connected freedom to knowledge and truth.

“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32 NKJV)

- In Romans 12 Paul said, *“You will be transformed by the renewing of your mind”* Your emotions will be transformed when you change the way you think.

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. (Rom 12:2 NKJV)

IN ALL DISCERNMENT (Phil 1:9)

We must love on God's terms. Jesus is the only Man qualified to define love. There are many definitions of love in the culture that are not in agreement with God's Word. This requires true discernment.

- There are so many definitions of love in the culture, and ten years from now there will be many more. They are convincing definitions, but they are not biblical. As a matter of fact, they are in opposition to Jesus' definition. It takes spiritual discernment because the issues can be complex, crafty, hidden, subtle, and layered. You have to have knowledge of His heart and the cross and how He views things, but you need spiritual discernment as well, which is similar to having knowledge because they are very similar, but Paul emphasized those as two different facets.

THAT YOU MAY APPROVE THE THINGS THAT ARE EXCELLENT (Phil 1:10)

Spiritual discernment enables us to "see" and rejoice in what God calls excellent.

- God wants us to align with His heart and His truths that are extremely hard to grasp in our natural mind or flesh. Its not just grasping these realities but actually being able to say from our hearts that they are "EXCELLENT"

THAT YOU MAY BE SINCERE (Phil 1:10)

This is a prayer to walk out our sincere intentions to obey. Obedience does not start off mature, obedience always starts as a sincere intention, and most of the time we stumble in that intention for a while. But over time we stumble in it less, and begin to walk it out in a consistent way.

THAT YOU MAY BE WITHOUT OFFENSE (BLAMELESS) (Phil 1:10)

We pray for grace that we would live without offense. This is not talking about us being offended at people, although that is a very powerful biblical truth. This passage is about us not doing things out of the will of God that offend other people. I also believe you can apply this to not being offended with Him and His leadership.

"I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men." (Acts 24:16 NKJV)

"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God" (1 Cor 10:31-32 ESV)

