

# How Paul Prays for the Philippians

## Philippians 1:9-11

### **Introduction**

In many of Paul's letters, he begins by telling his readers how he prays for them. He does this to help them see areas they need to grow, and to see why this growth is so important. And that's what God wants to do in our hearts today.

### **What kind of love is Paul praying for? (1:9)**

Is it love for God, or love for others? I couldn't find any clues in Philippians 1. But I did find help in 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13. Here Paul is praying a very similar prayer, and he explicitly says that this love is love for other people. So it's probable that Paul means the same thing in Philippians.

So Paul is praying that they would abound in love for others. To love other people means to desire and pursue their well-being. But Paul says this love needs knowledge and discernment –

### **Why does love need knowledge and all discernment? (1: 9)**

It's because we need knowledge and discernment to know what others need for their well-being, and to know how we can best pursue their well-being. We get this knowledge from God's word, the leading of the Holy Spirit, and counsel from others.

### **Why does Paul pray that they will abound in this sort of love? (1:9-11)**

It's because then they will be pure and blameless for the day of Christ — the Second Coming.

At the end of history Jesus Christ will return to earth. Those who did not trust Christ will be guilty for their sins, and so will be sent to hell forever. But those who did trust Christ will be forgiven for all their sins and welcomed into heaven.

Not only that, but the more they abounded in love for others, the more they will be seen as pure and blameless, and the more glory and praise will come to God.

### **How will our love and righteousness bring glory and praise to God? (1:10-11)**

It's because our love and righteousness does not come from ourselves. It is a gift of God's mercy through Jesus Christ.

So the more we abound in love, the more we will bring praise and glory to God. Let's abound in love.



## **HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING**

*(Sometimes in our home groups we talk about Sunday's teaching, so we can work together on responding to God's Word — asking questions, sharing insights, talking together.)*

1. Do you agree that 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 shows that the love Paul is praying for in Philippians 1 is love for other people? Why or why not?
2. What are some ways you in your home group have shown love for each other recently? Brainstorm and see if you can come up with 10 other ways.
3. Come up with a couple of ways each of you could love people you know who don't yet know Christ.
4. Why is it such good news that this love comes through Jesus Christ (11)?
5. How — specifically and concretely — does love come through Jesus Christ? What does he actually do to enable us to love? How do we experience this when we are not feeling loving?
6. How does it motivate you to think that if you abound in love for others, then you will bring glory and praise to God at the end of history?
7. What is the Holy Spirit stirring in your heart as a result of this passage? What is he calling you to do? Share with each other, and pray for each other.

