

JOURNEY TO OZ "IF I ONLY HAD A BRAIN" PHILIPPIANS 1:9-11

This Week's Core Competency

Kindness/Goodness – I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others. 1 Thessalonians 5:15 *Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.*

Picking a Core Competency that reflects the content of Paul's prayer for the Philippians found in the opening of his letter (1:9-11) isn't that easy. Prayer is an obvious choice: "I pray to God to know him, to lay my request before him and to find direction for my daily life." But picking the Core Practice is based on Paul's *example* of prayer rather than the content of the passage itself. In it Paul describes what he prays for them; he doesn't instruct them regarding prayer.

Love is a better obvious choice: "I unconditionally and sacrificially love and forgive others." After all, the apostle prays that their "love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight." The fact that he doesn't tell them what to love suggests that he wants them to possess this virtue in an absolute sense. In other words, he wants them to demonstrate "this spiritual fruit in any and all ways" (Homer A. Kent, "Philippians," *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 11:108). But picking this Core Virtue largely overlooks the why of Paul's prayer described in detail in verses 10 and 11. Verse 10 identifies the two-fold result of love that keeps on growing more and more, together

Love must be intelligent and morally discerning.

– Homer A. Kent

with knowledge and depth of insight. And while "knowledge" and "depth of insight" are presented as results, they are easily read as two things in addition to love that the apostle wants for his readers. And verse 11 identifies the ultimate purpose for all things, "the glory and praise of God."

Eternity is a less likely choice: "I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish his eternal kingdom." Paul mentions the return of Christ in verse 10, alluding to the fact that believers will one day stand before him to be rewarded according to their works, and he wants to ensure that his readers are prepared for the judgment seat of Christ. Choosing to do what is best in life and do it without duplicity will certainly go a long way toward preparing them for that day. But picking this Core Belief overlooks even more of the passage to focus on a passing remark.

Kindness/Goodness is perhaps the best choice: "I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others." While not explicitly mentioned, this Core Virtue is implicit in all three verses. The love Paul petitions God for in verse 9 is *active*, not passive. It is *dynamic*, not static. It's *Agape* love, a verbal noun; it seeks the well-being of others in part through acts of kindness. The discernment mentioned in verse 10 alludes to doing the right thing especially with respect to demonstrating love. Purity and blamelessness in the same verse speak of the integrity of one's actions. They speak of selfless acts of kindness done in the best interest of others. As Paul says elsewhere, "Everything is

cont. pg. 2

permissible'—but not everything is beneficial. 'Everything is permissible'—but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others" (1Co 10:23, 24). Finally, the righteous fruit mentioned in verse 11, refers to good works or perhaps "right" works, which fits nicely with the creed's mention of doing the right things with respect to others.

Paul had a vision for the Philippians. He wanted to see them become people who whose lives were "filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ" (1:7). He wanted to see them become people who do the right things with respect to others, sincere people who do what matters, because of a love that keeps on growing more and more.

Praying Paul's Prayer

Father, I pray that my love will keep on growing more and more, together with knowledge and wisdom, so that I will be able to do what is best, so that I will be free from all impurity and blame on the Day of Christ, having a life filled with the virtues which only Jesus Christ can produce, for the glory and praise of God.

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Philippians 1:9-11

9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God. (NIV(c)1984)

Cf., another translation

9 And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (ESV)

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Circle "love" in v. 9.
- * Underline "more and more" in v. 9.
- * Circle "in knowledge" and "depth of insight" in v. 9.
- * Box "so that" indicating *result* in v. 10.
- * Circle "discern" in v. 10.
- * Circle "pure" and "blameless" in v. 10
- * Bracket "day of Christ" in v. 10.
- * Bracket "fruit of righteousness" in v. 11.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. How relevant is Paul's ancient prayer for us modern readers? Explain. (Cf., Eph 1:15-23; Col 1:9-13)
2. Compare the opening prayers of Paul's prison epistles (Eph 1:17-23; Php 1:9-11; Col 1:9-12; Phm 6). Identify any recurring petitions you see in them.
3. If "love" is a verb, what do "knowledge and depth of insight" have to do with it?
4. Identify the two-fold result of love with knowledge and insight that keeps on growing more and more?
5. The ability to "discern what is best" must be valuable. How so?
6. What could being "pure and blameless" possibly have to do with love? Explain.
7. "Fruit" is used *figuratively* in verse 11. To what does it refer?
8. Explain the relationship of this "fruit" to "righteousness."
9. Describe the relationship of "Jesus Christ" to this fruit using his own words (cf., Jn 15:5).
10. **Discussion:** Talk about the meaning of the ultimate goal of the Christian life according to verse 11.

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Each of Paul's four prison epistles contains an opening thanksgiving and prayer (Eph 1:15-23; Php 1:3-11; Col 1:3-15; Phm 4-7). And while Paul's prayers for his readers are different, they have certain petitions in common—perhaps because the letters were written around the same time, or perhaps because the petitions include what is essential for Christian growth and spirituality. These "essentials" include: love, wisdom, insight, understanding, knowledge of God and his will, righteousness, and fruitfulness, not to mention other lesser ones.

Paul's prayer for the Philippians is found in 1:9-11. This one long complex sentence in the NIV, as well as most other English translations, contains only one petition, but that petition is augmented by so many attendant and subordinate ideas that it appears Paul is requesting a number of things for the Philippians.

In verse 4 Paul tells his readers that he prayed for them; in verses 9-11 he describes what and why he prayed for them. First *what*: he prayed that their love would continue to grow, and that alongside it, their knowledge and insight would grow as well. The GNB puts it this way, "I pray that your love will keep on growing more and more, together with true knowledge and perfect judgment." The fact that the apostle uses the Greek word *agape* clearly indicates that he has something more than "affection" in mind. *Agape* love rises above mere emotion. It engages in action, and because it does, it needs to be accompanied by knowledge and insight. It's love like that demonstrated by the Samaritan in Jesus' parable who "took pity" on a man left for dead by robbers (Lk 10:30-36). When he saw the man, he knew he had to do something; he knew he had to act. What he decided to do—treat the man's wounds, take him to an inn to care for him, and provide for his subsequent treatment—evidenced knowledge and insight. His was a concrete example of what Paul requested for the Philippians in verse 9. As one writer says, "A better knowledge of God and his ways will promote greater harmony within the fellowship, and give the Philippians a clearer understanding of their mutual relationships as fellow-believers"

(Ralph P. Martin, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*, TNTC, 66).

In verse 10 Paul tells his readers *why* he prayed *what* he prayed for them. "So that" introduces a two-fold result. The apostle prayed that their love together with knowledge and insight might grow, first, so that they may be able to "choose what is best" (GNB). Living the Christian life often involves doing what is right rather than wrong, but perhaps even more often, it involves doing what is best or matters most rather than what is good or matters least. A mature Christian loves eloquently by making every demonstration of the virtue count the most. And second, so that they may "be free from all impurity and blame on the Day of Christ" (GNB). When the Lord returns, believers will all appear before his judgment seat. Paul describes it this way in 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad." The outcome of the judgment will be rewards received or rewards lost. A mature Christian's love is untainted by mixed motives; it's "pure." And it does no harm; it's "blameless." The apostle prayed what he prayed for the Philippians because he wanted them to be richly rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ.

In verse 11 Paul elaborates on the two-fold result he described in verse 10, adding that standing pure and blameless before Christ when he returns amounts to being "filled with the truly good qualities which only Jesus Christ can produce, for the glory and praise of God" (GNB). The "fruit of righteousness" (NIV) refers to righteous works that Christ produces in those who believe. In the end, God, the one ultimately responsible for the believer's conversion and transformation, is glorified, for "we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works" (Eph 2:10).

The Message of the Passage

Paul's prayer for the Philippians is for you, too, so pray likewise for yourself and for other believers in Christ.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James suggests in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your thoughts on the passage:**

–Write about what God wants you to know . . .

–Write about how God wants you to feel . . .

–Write about what God wants you to do . . .

“If I Only Had a Brain”

(Use the space below for Sunday's message notes)

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

- v. 9 **love** Gk. *agape*. While he speaks of love "absolutely" (J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*, 86), their love for one another is most likely what Paul had in mind (Frank Thielman, *The NIV Application Commentary: Philippians*, 40; see 2:2; cf., 1Th 3:12). Others disagree. "No reason appears in the passage to limit this to love for God, for each other, or for Paul. Most likely, it is unrestricted and refers to the continuing demonstration of this spiritual fruit in any and all ways" (Kent, 108). Love's primary connotation here "is not 'affection,' as in the preceding phrase about Christ (v. 8), but rather 'a sober kind of love—love in the sense of placing high value on a person or thing,' which expresses itself in actively seeking the benefit of the one so loved. And this is what Paul now prays will 'abound yet more and more' among the Philippian believers. The rest of the prayer, after all, emphasizes 'love' not as 'affection' but as behavior, behavior that is both 'pure' (stemming from right motives) and 'blameless' (lacking offense)" (Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT, 99).
- v. 9 **may abound** Cf., "I pray that your love will keep on growing more and more" (GNT).
- v. 9 **more and more** "The Greek text actually has the expression 'still more and more,' the first part of which is omitted in the NIV. The expression builds layer upon layer to make the point. 'More' would have sufficed, 'more and more' was better, but 'still more and more' accentuated the point being made" (Richard R. Melick, Jr., *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, NAC, 64).
- v. 9 **in** "The single preposition controlling both nouns ["knowledge" and "insight"] suggests a very close relationship between them" (Fee, 100).
- v. 9 **knowledge, insight** Cf. "together with true knowledge and perfect judgment" (GNT). The phrase "in knowledge and depth of insight" modifies or qualifies Paul's request that the love of the Philippians "abound more and more." Paul's prayer request is a two-sided coin. He wants to see the love of the Philippians grow, and he wants that growing love to be characterized or accompanied by knowledge and insight. "The first word (*epignosis*) is probably the key. Its primary sense is not so much 'knowledge about' something, but rather the kind of 'full,' or 'innate,' knowing that comes from experience or personal relationship. The second word (*aesthesis*), which occurs only here in the NT, is more difficult to pin down. In secular Greek it denotes moral understanding based on experience, hence something close to 'moral insight'" (Fee 100). One writer summarizes, "Spiritual knowledge, gained from an understanding of divine revelation, [i.e., knowledge of God who is love and his will], enables the believer to love *what* God commands and in the *way* he reveals. The joining of the expression 'depth of insight' to 'knowledge' stresses moral perception and the *practical application* of knowledge to the myriad circumstances of life" (Kent, 108 italics added).
- v. 10 **discern** "The discerning atmosphere in which their love should operate will require them continually 'to discern what is best.' Some things are clearly good or bad. In others the demarcation is not so readily visible. In Christian conduct and the exercise of love, such factors as one's influence on others, as well as the effect on oneself, must be considered (1 Cor 10:32). The question should not only be 'Is it harmful?' but 'Is it helpful?' (1 Cor 10:23)" (108).
- v. 10 **what is best** Or "what really matters" (NLT). "The phrase 'discern what is best' refers to the ability to distinguish 'the things that really matter' from a variety of competing possibilities" (Thielman, 41).
- v. 10 **and may be** One author thinks a second request is introduced here. "The prayer contains two basic petitions. These are known by two 'that' (*hina*) clauses in the Greek text. The NIV fails to pick up this distinction and even makes the second petition part of a parallel statement ('and may be pure and blameless'). [The ESV makes it a dependant clause that describes the result of approving what is excellent; cf., Fee, 96.] The two petitions are: 'that your love may abound . . . so that you may be able to discern what is best' (1:9-10a); and that you 'may be pure and blameless . . . having been filled with the fruit of righteousness' (1:10b-11)" (Melick, 62).
- v. 10 **pure, blameless** "The word translated 'pure' appears twice in 2 Corinthians to describe Paul's apostleship as absolutely sincere, without the 'mixed motives' he ascribes to his opponents (2:17). In 1 Cor 5:7 in a corresponding ethical context, it bears the sense of a pure lump of dough, 'unmixed' with leaven. In the present context it most likely refers to purity (sincerity) of motive, in terms of relationships within the community. Likewise, *aproskopos* is not Paul's regular word for the idea of 'blameless.' Ordinarily, as in 2:15 and 3:6, he uses a form of *amemptos*, a word denoting behavior that is without observable fault. But *aproskopos* has to do with being 'blameless' in the sense of 'not offending' or not causing someone else to stumble" (Fee, 102).
- v. 11 **fruit of righteousness** "Does Paul intend, 'filled with the fruit that *comes from* the righteousness that Christ has provided,' thus emphasizing the kind of fruitfulness that has God's gift of right-standing with himself as its *source*? Or does he intend, 'filled with the fruit *consisting of* the righteousness that marks one who belongs to Christ,' thus emphasizing the kind of righteousness that, coming through Christ, has a new kind of *content*? Although this is not an easy choice, and one's theological proclivities are with the former, both the OT background of the language and the grammar of the sentence favor the latter" (103; Melick, 67).
-

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

With classes back in full swing after the Christmas break, I have been reminding my kids that it's time to dig in and finish the school year strong. They are reestablishing some study habits that they have relaxed in and are attempting to refocus on homework instead of holiday festivities. The very early stages of senioritis have set in with my daughter who will graduate in June. Setting goals and being disciplined requires being intentional. This is true in our spiritual lives as well. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul prays that their love and knowledge would increase and that they would produce the fruit of changed lives. You and I have the opportunity to go deeper this year. We can plan on 2013 being the year we have a regular quiet time, or the year we memorize scripture or the year we read through the Bible or the year we attend a Bible study or community group. Our call to disciple and train our kids can only come out of the overflow of our own spiritual transformation. Thank the Lord we don't have to perfect to lead our kids, just on the journey with Him. I'm praying for you this year as you parent the beautiful blessings that have been entrusted to you.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Philippians 1:9-10

Fill in the blanks: "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in _____ and depth of _____ so that you may be able to _____ what is best and may be _____ and _____ until the day of Christ.

What Do You Think

1. Look up the word "discern" in the dictionary and write down what it means.
2. How will discernment help you make good choices?
3. Verse 11 says that you will be "filled with the fruit of righteousness". Go to Galatians 5:22-23 to see what some of those are.

What R U Going To Do

We are learning this week how to BECOME more like Christ. List something you did this week to accomplish that on the "Do" blank of your KidPix Coupon. Be specific!

MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Kindness/Goodness - Treating others better than myself

Memory Verse

Philippians 1:6 "Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC _____ and Verse _____. Family completed **Say** _____ **Think** _____ **Do** _____

Child's name _____ Grade _____ Parent's signature _____

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians*

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

Tom Bulick (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) for twelve years before accepting the position of Spiritual Formation Pastor at Pantego Bible Church. He and his wife Ruth have been married forty-five years and have one son, Zach.

Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



8001 Anderson Blvd.
Ft. Worth, TX 76120
1-866-PANTEGO
Fax 817-275-6403
www.pantego.org

The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.