**Love Abounding God’s Way**

*Philippians 1:9-11*

**Introduction**

1. The apostle Paul had a great care and concern for the Philippian brethren (**Philippians 1:3-8**):
   1. Thanksgiving to God for them and requests made for them – keeps them in remembrance (**vv. 3-4)**.
   2. For their fellowship (shared participation) in the gospel **(v. 5**):
      1. Their support of Paul in His apostolic work (**4:14-18**).
      2. Their obedience to his teaching in the gospel **(v. 6)** – work began – spiritual work in them through the gospel. (including, but not limited to, their support of Paul in the gospel’s work)
      3. In such support of Paul and submission to his teaching in Christ they are partakers of grace with him as he is imprisoned **(v. 7).**
   3. He has the same affection for them as Christ **(v. 8)** – manifested in his labors in the gospel which placed him in prison in the first place.
2. Paul enumerated some of the things he brought up in his prayers offered on behalf of the Philippians **(vv. 9-11) –** ultimately that their love would abound more and more.
   1. However, this is a love which he carefully identifies.
   2. It is a love which has certain qualities, and which acts in certain ways, and fulfills certain purposes.
   3. It is not an aimless love, or a love lacking definition – it is informed, directed, calculated, and effectual.
3. Love is the seat of all the Christian is and does – **Matthew 22:34-40** – love for God, and neighbor.
   1. How important is it then that our love fits the mold of God? – **cf. 1 John 4:8** – God is love.
   2. Our love should abound – ever increase – but it should abound God’s way.
4. Love that Abounds in Knowledge and Discernment
5. Knowledge – Intelligent Love
   1. Love according to the world is an amorphous concept – it has various forms and ways, no definite ones.
      1. Love how you love.
      2. Be loved how you want to be loved.
   2. If God is love – **1 John 4:8** – and God is an intelligent being, then love is a matter of intellect as well.
      1. Not mere intellect.
      2. But requires knowledge.
   3. **John 14:15** – love involves the keeping of Christ’s commandments.
      1. Even the love of other humans does – **Matthew 22:39-40**
   4. Love must be rooted in the knowledge of Christ – **Ephesians 3:14-19**
      1. Spirit in inner man – through word.
      2. Resulting in Christ dwelling in hearts.
      3. Resulting in grounded in love.
      4. Resulting in being filled with the fullness of God in Christ.
6. Discernment – Calculated Love
   1. Knowledge is only part of maturity. Discernment is needed – **Hebrews 5:14** – discern between good and evil.
      1. I.e. it is not just a basic knowledge, but an active and practical knowledge.
      2. A knowledge which progresses to the weighing of options, and judges what is best based on that knowledge. ***(“senses exercised”)***
   2. A picture of calculated love, or love abounding in discernment **– 1 Corinthians 13:4-7**
      1. Each of these characteristics comes from a knowledge of God’s word.
      2. These don’t just happen BUT ARE WELL THOUGHT OUT IN ANY GIVEN SITUATION AND APPROPRIATELY APPLIED.
7. To Approve What is Excellent
8. Approve – *dokimazō* – “to prove with a view to approving,” (VINE)
   1. “to make a critical examination of something to determine genuineness, put to the test, examine” (BDAG)
   2. “to draw a conclusion about worth on the basis of testing, prove, approve” (BDAG)
   3. With such knowledge and discernment, be able to successfully test any given thing to determine its nature and value, and thus approve it for your use or not.
9. Tested for Good or Evil
   1. The basic principle – **Romans 12:9**
   2. The basic test – **1 Thessalonians 5:19-22** – based on the standard of inspired scripture.
   3. Matters that are proven to be evil by scripture are not to be approved and applied.
   4. Matters that are proven to be good by scripture are to be approved and can be applied.
10. Tested for Good or Excellent
    1. Notice, he does not say approve what is GOOD, but “approve the things that are EXCELLENT.”
       1. Just because they are good does not mean they are excellent.
    2. Excellent – *diapherō* – “differ to one’s advantage from someone or something, be worth more than, be superior to” (BDAG)
    3. It may be the difference between being lawful or helpful – **1 Corinthians 10:23**
       1. Example of context – eating meats offered to idols.
       2. **1 Corinthians 8:1** – love edifies.
       3. **1 Corinthians 8:9-13** – are your actions merely based on knowledge, or on discerning love which is approving what is excellent? Are you causing your brother to stumble?
    4. Personally – Is that what is best for you? Not everything that is lawful is helpful – is it excellent? (**cf. Hebrews 12:1** – Might not be sin, but is it a weight?)
11. To be Sincere and Without Offense
12. Purity
    1. Sincere – *eilikrinēs* – “generally ‘unmixed, without alloy’, then in moral sense pertaining to being sincere, without hidden motives or pretense, pure” (BDAG)
       1. Only other appearance in NT **– 2 Peter 3:1** – pure.
       2. ***“that ye may be pure and offenceless” (YLT)***
    2. To the end of being pure – ***“till the day of Christ”*** – with the judgment in mind.
    3. Pure as Christ is pure – **1 John 3:2-3**
    4. Pure in relationships with others – **1 Timothy 5:2**
    5. Holy as God is holy – **1 Peter 1:15-16**
    6. Some “love” in such ways that are uninformed, misdirected, not approved as excellent, or even good, and are therefore impure before God.
13. Blameless before God and Others
    1. Without offense – meant either as passive (blameless before God) or active (not being an offense toward others).
       1. Sincere, or pure gives the passive sense – **Philippians 2:14-16** – blameless and harmless.
    2. Without offense toward others – **Matthew 18:6-9** – not causing others to sin and taking any measures to avoid such.
       1. Our relationship with God is affected by our relationship with each other – **Matthew 5:23-24; 1 John 4:20-21**
14. To be Filled with Fruits of Righteousness
15. Active Love
    1. The agapē love of scripture always follows in action.
       1. Affection is involved – moved by a sense of value estimated in its object.
       2. But the action makes the difference – doing what is needed for what has been estimated as valuable.
    2. Purpose of the commandment – **1 Timothy 1:5** – love
    3. Directive of the new life – **Romans 6:4, 11, 13** – newness of life, alive to God, present members as instruments of righteousness.
16. According to God’s Will
    1. Not just any works – **Matthew 7:21-23** – lawless.
    2. Righteousness – i.e. what is defined as right by God’s word.
    3. Impossible without Christ – **Philippians 1:11** – ***“which are by Christ Jesus”***
       1. Imitating Christ – **1 Corinthians 11:1**
       2. Abiding in Christ – **John 15:5-8**
17. To God’s Glory
    1. ***Philippians 1:11 – “to the glory and praise of God”***
    2. ***John 15:8 – “by this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit”***
    3. God is ultimately at the center of all we do and is the recipient of all we do. It is for Him.

**Conclusion**

1. The love God demands from us toward Him and each other is not without a standard.
2. It must be directed by knowledge of His will, and careful discernment of the situation.
3. Only this kind of love is active in righteousness and brings glory to God.
4. Such components of scriptural love should be applied in all our relationships.