**Transcendent Love**

*Philippians 1:9-11*

**Introduction**

1. Love is the consecration and consummation of human energy. (**cf. Matthew 22:37-40**)
	1. Consecration – all our capability given by God is set apart for the purpose of love.
	2. Consummation – of all things humanity has accomplished, or will accomplish, love is the greatest and fullest realization of the capacity of human ability.
2. The love which God would have us abound in is a special, transcendent love.
3. Yet not all love is such – “In friendship (philia) the partners seek mutual solace; in sexual love (eros) mutual satisfaction. In both cases these feelings are aroused because of what the love is. With agape it is the reverse. God’s agape is evoked not by what we are, but by what He is. It has its origin in the agent, not in the object. It is not that we are lovable, but that He is love. This agape might be defined as a deliberate desire for the highest good of the one loved, which shows itself in sacrificial action for that person’s good.” (Green, Michael)
4. Is it the love we are pursuing?
5. Intelligent Love – “in knowledge” (v. 9)
6. This implies that while love is subjective in its practice – i.e. “I” must love – it has an objective standard.
7. Love is not fluid, lacking structure. It is not a relative, amorphous concept.
8. Love is intelligent – **1 John 4:8** – God, an intelligent Being, is love.
	1. The love He requires of us – **Matthew 22:36-40** – has much to do with His entire revealed law.
	2. **1 John 5:1-2; 2 John 5-6** – to love is to walk according to God’s commandments, requires knowledge of them. (**cf. 1 Timothy 1:5** – purpose of the commandment is love.)
9. Paul’s prayer for the Philippians – **Philippians 1:3-11**
	1. **(v. 4)** – prayer of request.
		1. ***“prayer…request”*** – *deēsis* – a petition (STRONG).
	2. **(v. 9)** – the contents of the petition enumerated.
		1. ***“that your love may abound STILL more and more”*** – implies past love continuing on to the present.
		2. Not a rebuke of lacking love, but request for an increase beyond what they already have.
	3. **(v. 5)** – ***“for”*** – connecting to the previous verse regarding his request for them.
		1. ***“in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.” (NASB)***
		2. I.e. the prayer of petition regards their participation in the gospel.
		3. NOTE: ***“from the first day until now”*** – **(v. 9)** – ***“may abound STILL more and more”***
	4. **(v. 6)** – confidence of God completing the good work in them. (**cf. Philippians 2:12-12** – working out salvation, God working in them)
		1. Bring their participation in the gospel to an end (completion).
	5. **(v. 7)** – confidence of such due to their consistency of behavior, even as Paul is imprisoned (not ashamed of him or the gospel).
	6. Petition resumed, enumerated – (**v. 9**) – the love is not a new subject, but the continuing thought of their participation (fellowship) in the gospel with Paul.
		1. Love constitutes all their actions involving the efforts of and for the gospel.
		2. Implication – their love was one informed and directed by the gospel.
		3. **(v. 6)** – God’s completion of the good work in them would involve the process of **(vv. 9-11).**
10. “It’s all about love.” “We just need to love.” “We need to talk about love more.” “God just wants us to love Him and love each other.”
	1. But what does that mean?
	2. Love is rooted in the gospel, of which we must increase our knowledge to increase our love.
11. Calculated Love – “discernment” (v. 9)
12. NOTE: ***“knowledge”*** – *epignōsis* – “a strengthened form of [gnosis], expressing a fuller or a full “knowledge,” a greater participation by the “knower” in the object “known,” thus more powerfully influencing him.” (VINE)
	1. I.e. not for love to abound in a mere knowing, but a PARTICIPANT, I.E. ACTIVE KNOWLEDGE.
	2. Requires “discernment.”
13. **Discernment** – *aisthēsis* – “sensitive moral perception…Discernment selects, classifies, and applies what is furnished by knowledge.” (Vincent’s Word Studies)
	1. Discernment is the application in real life of the knowledge considered before.
14. **Hebrews 5:12-14** – contrast of the immature and mature.
	1. **(v. 14)** – the mature ***“[skilled] in the word of righteousness” (v. 13)*** in this way.
	2. Senses – *aisthētērion* – from the same word as aisthēsis (**Philippians 1:9).**
	3. ***“senses exercised to discern both good and evil”***
		1. **Solid food** – meatier, more complex matters of the gospel – belongs to this sort.
		2. Why? – **cf. 2 Peter 3:16; Jude 4** (opposite) – if their senses are exercised, they’ll be able to distinguish between sound and unsound conclusions.
	4. **“discernment” takes the “knowledge” and determines with sound perception how to make correct/best application in any given circumstance.**
15. Exceptional Love – “approve the things that are excellent” (v. 10)
16. The intended result of proper discernment.
17. Approve – *dokimazō* – to test (STRONG) (with a view to approve)
	1. Standard of love – **Romans 12:9** – un-pretended love abhors evil and clings to good.
	2. Good or evil? – **1 Thessalonians 5:19-22** – based on knowledge **(vv. 19-20)** (“test” same as “approve” in **Philippians 1:10**)
18. **But love does not simply settle on what is generally good but advances beyond for the sake of its object.**
19. Excellent – *diapherō* – differ to one’s advantage from someone or something, be worth more than, be superior to (BDAG)
	1. **1 Corinthians 10:23-24** – discernment to know the difference between what is lawful and what is helpful.
	2. For self (discipline – **cf. 1 Corinthians 6:12** – not being brought under the power of liberties) – **1 Corinthians 8:4-6** – eating meats offered to idols is a liberty.
		1. **1 Corinthians 8:10** – eating in an idol’s temple.
		2. Elaborated – **1 Corinthians 10:12, 14-22** – they had extended their “liberty” into unlawful grounds – lawful to eat that meat, but not in the temple worship of the idol.
	3. For others (edify) (especially emphasizes love) – **1 Corinthians 8:1-3, 7-13** – discernment between what is good (right to exercise liberty), and what is excellent (forgo that liberty for the sake of a weak brother).
20. Pure Love – “that you may be sincere and without offense” (v. 10)
21. This knowledge, followed by discernment rooted in it, will ensure our “loving actions” are truly loving according to the scriptures.
22. ***“and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ” (ESV)*** (sincere – unmixed; 2x – **2 Peter 3:1 – *“stir up your pure minds by way of reminder”****)*
23. ***“and without offense”*** – goes hand in hand with being “sincere,” “pure.”
24. ***“till the day of Christ”*** – i.e. ready for the judgment day.
	1. **1 Thessalonians 5:19-24, 17** – accomplished through the word. (Hence, all that Paul has described the love to be before.)
25. Some claim love in actions contrary to the scripture’s instruction – this cannot be the love defined and required by God.
	1. Love instead of exposing sin – **cf. 1 Peter 4:8; James 5:19-20** – love will ignore their faults because nobody is perfect?
	2. Love by joining in another’s sin – **cf. 1 Timothy 5:22** – avoiding a “self-righteous” vibe, and making others uncomfortable?
	3. Love by pursuing pleasure/happiness – **cf. Galatians 5:24** – example: unlawful marriage – love makes it okay? (Is it loving to that person, to God, to pursue sin?)
26. Love of (for) God – **1 John 2:15** – cannot include love for the world.
27. Love of neighbor – **Romans 13:10** – does no harm and is fulfillment of law.
28. Fruitful Love – “being filled with the fruits of righteousness” (v. 11)
29. The transcendent love may include emotion and affection but is an active love which is chosen even when such emotion and affection may be absent. (agapē)
30. ***“which are by Jesus Christ”*** – **John 15:5-8** – cannot love in this way, being filled with fruits of righteousness, without Christ = abiding in His word, and words abiding in us.
	1. ***“to the glory and praise of God”*** – only this love brings God glory.
	2. **(v. 8)** – this fruit is borne to God’s glory.
31. Ultimately, our love needs to be like the love of Jesus in every way – **John 13:34-35** (one another); **Hebrews 5:8** (showed love as a Son through obedience)
32. Is your love of this sort…
33. As a spouse? – headship, lead, provide, submit, support, follow, trust, like Christ?
34. As a parent? – instruction, discipline?
35. As a neighbor? – teaching gospel, active goodwill, exposing darkness?
36. As a member of God’s family? – care for needs, spiritual provision – edification, exhortation, rebuke, correction, discipline?

**Conclusion**

1. The love God reveals in scripture transcends the thoughts men have concerning love.
2. Our love must be molded by God’s revelation.
3. This love is what we are to relentlessly pursue, and it takes great effort, careful attention, and incredible sacrifice.