**Effective Prayer**

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday October 27th, 2019

Text: Phil. 1:9-11

#### Intro

1. We pray for one another, and ask for prayers for ourselves and for our loved ones.
   1. We ask for prayers for physical health, and that is right and good (James 5:13-16).
   2. We are told in *Js. 5:16* that the effective prayer of the righteous can accomplish much.
2. Imagine having Paul praying for you!
   1. **Phil. 1:3-5:** Paul prayed joyfully for the brethren at Philippi, from a prison in Rome (1:7, 12-14)
   2. Not praying for himself but for their well-being!
3. Paul wanted brethren to pray for him and he prayed for them.
   1. *Eph. 6:18-19:* Paul stated that we need to pray for all the saints, and he even asked for the prayers of the Ephesian saints on his behalf.
4. Paul set an example of praying for the spiritual well-being of the Philippian saints:
   1. Paul is imprisoned in Rome, about 800 miles away and says the Philippians bring him great joy! (1:3-8). The Praetorian Guard and everyone else knows it is for Jesus (1:12-14)
   2. **Phil. 1:9-11:** Paul prayed that they would abound in love & knowledge, approve excellent things, be sincere & blameless, and be filled with fruit (lead productive lives for God).
5. Do we recognize the need to pray for these spiritual things in our lives? In others’ lives?

**I. Abounding Love (Phil. 1:9)**

1. Paul wants the Philippians to have an abounding love. Love produces obedience.
   1. *I Jn. 5:3:* Love for God causes one to obey God. If we love Him we keep His commands.
      1. I Peter 3:10-13: One who would “love life and see good days” must obey God.
   2. *Jn. 14:15:* Jesus says, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”
   3. *I Cor. 13:1-3:* Love is the motive that causes men to serve God in an acceptable manner.
   4. I Pet. 1:22-23: God wants His children to love one another with a “pure heart fervently.”
   5. Jn. 13:34-35:We must love one another as Christ loved us; a selfless sacrificial love.
2. This abounding (overflowing) love must be tempered with:
   1. Knowledge – The word here means “full knowledge.”
      1. Biblical love is not something that just happens!
      2. *Phil 1:9:* It is an emotion that must be guided by knowledge.
      3. Eph 5:17: God wants people to understand His will. It ***CAN*** beunderstood!
      4. *Prov. 1:7:* “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.”
   2. Discernment (judgment)
      1. Heb 5:12-14: The ability to discern right and wrong is a mark of maturity.
      2. *Ps. 119:104, 113*: “From Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.” Note the contrast between “love” and “hate.”
      3. Understanding of God’s word shows us the contrast and we can hate sin.
3. To abound in love is to abound in obedience to God!

**II. Approve Excellent Things (Phil. 1:10)**

1. Paul prayed that they would approve excellent things!
2. “Approve” *(Gr. dokimazo STR. G1381)* is a strong word.
   1. “To test, analyze, prove.” It is used to describe the analysis of metals (smelting).
3. “Excellent” *(Gr. diaphero STR G1308)* signifies that which is “distinct, unmixed…pure.”
4. God’s people must discern between right and wrong, good and evil (like testing of metals), and hold fast to the good – *I Thess. 5:21* (keeping that which is pure).
   1. How can one do this without a standard, an objective, or a criterion?
   2. Love for God’s word provides the basis for analyzing choices one must make in life.
      1. *II Thess. 2:10-12:* Love for truth will protect one against apostasy.
      2. Note: those who perish are those who “did not receive the love of the truth.”
      3. II Tim 3:16-17: God’s Word is the standard by which things are to be measured.
      4. Phil. 4:8: Whatever is excellent we are to dwell on these things.
5. Some people are so spiritually immature that they cannot distinguish good from evil!
   1. Is. 5:20: In the days of Isaiah there was a serious confusion about right and wrong.
   2. What about today? Are there those who struggle with this today? *(Society is backwards)*
   3. Titus 1:15-16: Our works show what is in our hearts: good or bad.
   4. *Heb. 5:12-14:* This ability is a mark of spiritual maturity and exposes those who are spiritually immature.
6. To approve excellent things is to discern properly and choose what is good!

**III. “Be Sincere and Blameless” (Phil. 1:10)**

1. God wants people who are genuine; whose religion is not a mere external show.
   1. Mt. 15:8-9: Jesus compared religious leaders of His days with the people of Isaiah’s: they went through the motions but their hearts were corrupt!
2. Serving God must be done from the right motive *(Mt. 6:1).*
   1. *II Cor. 9:7:* Giving must be done from the heart.
   2. *Col. 3:16, Eph. 5:19:* Singing must be accompanied by the heart.
   3. *I Cor. 11: 24-28:* The Lord’s Supper must be eaten in the right way (an examined heart).
3. Paul wants the saints to be “blameless” *(Phil. 1:10).*
   1. Phil. 2:14-15: He wants them to be “blameless and innocent, above reproach.”
   2. This is possible although they live in an evil age among sinful people.
      1. *Dan. 1:8:* Daniel did not conform to the people’s practices. He made up his mind that he would not defile himself even if all his brethren did.
      2. *Phil. 4:22:* There were “saints in Caesar’s household.”
      3. *I Pet. 2:12:* We are to keep our “behavior excellent among the Gentiles” so they may glorify God (*Mt. 5:16*).
4. It is possible to keep ourselves “unstained” by the world around us! (Christians were doing it in the 1st century and we can do it now)

**IV. “Filled With Fruit” (Phil. 1:11)**

1. This is the product of “abounding in love, approving excellent things, and being blameless!”
   1. *Jn. 15:1-8:* Jesus emphasized the importance of fruit bearing.
   2. *Rom. 7:4:* Paul said that those “married to Christ” are to be fruit bearers!
      1. Rom. 6:20-21: The Romans, prior to obedience to Christ, had produced, with their lives, “fruit” of which they were ashamed.
      2. Rom. 6:22: As saints they produced holy fruit that would lead to everlasting life.
2. “Fruits of righteousness” are fruits of right doing; right doing as decreed by God!
   1. Gal. 5:22-23: The fruits of the Spirit become part of our nature if we walk by the Spirit!
   2. *II Tim 3:16-17:* The Scriptures furnish us unto every good work.
3. The Fruit of Righteousness is the product of our conduct!

**Conclusion**

* + - 1. Phil. 1:10: Paul says the motive to strive for these ideals is the “day of Christ.”
  1. There are three references to the “day of Christ” in Philippians. *(1:6, 1:10, 3:16)*
  2. *II Pet. 3:10:* The “day of Christ” is called the “day of the Lord.”
  3. *Jn. 12:48, II Cor. 5:10:* Men shall be judged in “the day of Christ.”
     + 1. Christians need to strive for these ideals because their lives shall be judged “in the day of Christ!”
       2. Do we pray for one another that we each will achieve these goals?
          1. As Paul prayed for the Philippian saints, so we should pray for one another!
       3. Striving for the ideals revealed in Paul’s Philippian prayer will bring people purpose and peace in life and heaven eternally!
       4. If not a Christian, you need to be! Repent and be baptized and start anew.
       5. If a Christian with unrepented sin, your soul is in jeopardy! Repent and seek forgiveness!