

This I Pray

Philippians 1:9–11 (NASB 1995)

⁹ And **this I pray, that** your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ so **that** you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; ¹¹ having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Introduction

Paul was a man of prayer. In freedom or in prison—he prayed. Everywhere. In joy or in suffering—he prayed. All the time.

And when we come to Philippians 1, we are given a glimpse—not just into the fact that Paul prayed—but **what he prayed for**.

And what he prays may surprise us. He does not pray for comfort. He does not pray for success. He does not even pray for safety. Instead, he prays for something deeper—something eternal.

Listen again to his words: “And this I pray...”

Content

This morning, we are going to learn from Paul what to pray—not only for ourselves, but for our families, our church, and those we love.

Paul presents us three prayer requests:

- That our **love would grow**
- That our **lives would be pure and discerning**
- And that we would **bear fruit for God’s glory. Until the Day of Christ.**

Let’s walk through this together.

1. Pray for Growing Love (v. 9)

“*And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment...*” Paul begins with love. But notice—he doesn’t just pray that they would have love. He prays that their love would **abound more and more**. In other words, Christian love is not meant to stay where it is. It is meant to grow. It is meant to deepen. It is meant to expand.

Love is like a river. If a river stops flowing, it becomes stagnant. It becomes polluted. But when a river keeps flowing, it becomes deeper and stronger. Paul is praying that our love would not become stagnant—but that it would keep growing.

What kind of love is this?

This is not merely human love. This is ‘agape’ love. This is the kind of love that lays down our own lives. This is the kind of love that comes from God—the kind of love that:

- Loves when it is difficult
- Loves when it is costly
- Loves even when it is not returned
- Loves even our enemies (Matthew 5:44).

It is the love that Jesus showed us (John 13:1). And it is the love He commands us to show others (John 13:35).

But notice something important

Paul doesn’t say: “Let your love grow... no matter what.” He says: “...in real knowledge and all discernment.” In other words, love must be guided. Love must be shaped by truth. Love must be directed by wisdom. Because love without truth can go wrong.

Illustration: Driving at Night

Love without knowledge is like driving at night without headlights. You may have good intentions. You may be sincere. But without light—you will eventually crash. God’s Word is the light that guides our love (Psalm 119:105).

It teaches us:

- How to love

- When to speak
- When to be silent
- When to confront
- When to forgive

Application

So here is the question: Is your love growing? Or has it become stagnant? Are you loving more today than you did a year ago? And is your love shaped by God's truth—or by your feelings? Paul says: **“Pray for growing love.”**

2. Pray for Discernment and Integrity (v. 10)

“... so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ.” Now Paul shows us the result of growing love. When love is guided by truth—it produces discernment. It produces the ability to test and choose what is right.

“Approve the things that are excellent”

The literal meaning ‘to approve’ means to test and approve. Like a potter lifts the final clay pot to the Sun and chooses what is good. This means more than just avoiding what is wrong. It means testing out and choosing what is best. Because not everything in life is evil. But not everything is excellent.

Illustration: Food Choices

You can eat junk food every day and survive. But you won't thrive. In the same way, spiritually: There are things that are not sinful—but they are not beneficial. “All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify” (1 Corinthians 10:23).

Paul is praying that we would have the wisdom to test and choose what is best—not just what is acceptable.

“Sincere and blameless”

Paul then describes the kind of life that is pleasing to the Lord.

- **Sincere** — pure on the inside
- **Blameless** — consistent on the outside

Illustration: Clear Glass

To be sincere is like being clear glass. There is nothing hidden. Nothing fake. What you see is what you get. No hypocrisy. No double life.

Blameless

To be blameless does not mean perfect. It means living in such a way that others are not tripped up by your life. You are not giving others a reason to stumble. Neither do you give any chance to the devil to accuse you.

“Until the day of Christ”

Paul reminds us—we are living toward a day. A day when we will stand before Christ. A day when everything will be revealed. And until that day—God is at work in us. He started a good work among us. He is constantly working on us. He will do so until that day. He commits Himself to: Shaping us. Refining us. Transforming us. He is faithful.

Illustration: Palace, Not a Cottage

Think of it this way: You may be happy with a small cottage in your walk with God, but God is not building a small cottage. He is building a palace in your life. Because—He plans to enter and dwell in it fully. And that means construction is ongoing. It is called sanctification. Sometimes it’s uncomfortable. Sometimes it’s slow. But it is purposeful. It is a life-long work. He is making you perfect and blameless. All for our eternal good.

Application

So ask yourself: Am I choosing what is best—or just what is easy? Is my life sincere—or divided? Am I living with the Day of Christ in view? Paul says:

“Pray for discernment and integrity.”

3. Pray for a Fruitful Life (v. 11)

“... having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.” Now we come to the result.

A life that is growing in love and guided by truth...will become a life that bears fruit.

“Fruit of righteousness”

This is a life that produces:

- Good works
- Godly character
- Christlike behavior

But notice carefully: This fruit does not come from us. It comes **through Jesus Christ**. He is the vine, and we are the branches.

Righteousness Through Christ

We are not made right with God by what we do. We are made right with God by what Christ has done. He lived the life we could not live. He died the death we deserved. We are in Christ. So, when God looks at us, He looks at Christ, and we are hidden in Christ.

God made Christ who knew no sin to *be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21). And through faith in Him—we receive His righteousness. We become justified.

Illustration: The Robe

It’s like standing before a king in filthy clothes. And someone gives you a perfect robe to change your clothes. You didn’t earn it. You didn’t deserve it. But now you stand accepted in a perfect robe. That robe is Christ’s righteousness.

Fruit Is Evidence

And when we receive that righteousness... Fruit begins to grow. Fruit is not something we force. It is something that flows.

Illustration: Apple Tree

An apple tree does not struggle to produce apples. If it is healthy—fruit comes naturally. In the same way: If you are rooted in Christ, if you are abiding in Him and in His Word... If you walk after the Holy Spirit... fruit will come.

“To the glory and praise of God”

And here is the ultimate purpose. Not your reputation. Not your success.
But God's glory and praise.

Illustration: A Mirror

Your life is like a mirror. It is not meant to reflect yourself. It is meant to reflect God. So that when people see your life—they don't say, "What a great person." They say, "What a great God."

Application

So ask yourself: Is my life producing fruit of the Holy Spirit? And who gets the glory for it? Paul says: **"Pray for a fruitful life to the glory of God."**

Conclusion

So what should we pray? Not just for comfort. Not just for success. But this: Lord, grow my love. Lord, sharpen my discernment. Lord, make my life fruitful for Your glory. Because one day—we will stand before Christ. And on that day, what will matter most is not what we achieved... but who we became in Him.

Closing Prayer (Optional Addition)

Lord Jesus,
I come before You today and confess that I need You.
Grow my love—make it deeper and truer.
Sharpen my discernment—help me choose what is excellent.
Purify my heart—make me sincere and blameless.
And fill my life with fruit that brings glory to You.
I surrender my life to You again today.
Have Your way in me.
In Jesus' name, Amen.