

## PHILIPPIANS Part 2: Praying for Someone Else - 06.13.10

**Play:** "Prayer is not Rocket Science" Video Clip [3:25]

**Intro** – Prayer is not rocket science. But it can be confusing exactly how we should pray... especially when it comes to praying for other people. What should we pray for? We learn from Jesus' model prayer that we should pray not for our will but for our heavenly Father's kingdom to come... for His will to be done. What exactly does that prayer sound like? Paul's model prayer in Philippians 1:8-11 tells us what God wants for us... what we should want for ourselves and for other people.

### READ Philippians 1:9-11 ESV

**"My prayer is that your LOVE ..."** (Philippians 1:9a)

It is appropriate that we begin our conversation about prayer with the topic of LOVE! It is the hallmark of Christianity... and CR! Jesus told us that the two most important commands were (a) Love God; (b) Love people! John told us in his first letter that God IS love!

**"God is love." 1 John 4:8b**

If God IS love and we belong to Him, then we will become like Him:

**"I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."**  
John 17:26

In fact Jesus said that this would be how people will know that we are Christ-followers, **"by this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."** (John 13:35)

**What about the "may abound more and more"?** Is Paul talking about our love? Talk about ESV comma. Or is it better to understand that our love may abound more and more IN Knowledge and Discernment? **Explain difference and implication of latter – not sentimental gush! God's love is infinite, but we are not. Our "love receptors" can only "become rich in" "abound more and more in" as we know God and his love "more and more."**

**"... may abound more and more with KNOWLEDGE ..."**  
(Phil. 1:9b)

It has always been God's desire that we would know Him better.

**"Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him ... increasing in the knowledge of God." Colossians 1:10**

There is another shade of meaning here... to recognize. Paul desires them to "recognize-know" God's love in the circumstances of life. How do we do this? 2 Ways: (1) God's Word – His revealed written Word, the Bible and (2) His Holy Spirit living in us. Both in conjunction with the other. We know the Spirit would never reveal something to us that would be contrary to His written Word. We also know we can never understand His written Word apart from His Spirit

Notice this is one way our love abounds! It is shaped, molded, directed by our knowledge of God. As our knowledge of God abounds, so also does our Love for Him and Others.

**The other way our love abounds is through more discernment.**

“... may abound more and more with all **DISCERNMENT**.”  
(Philippians 1:9c)  
NIV - “depth of insight”; GNT - “perfect judgment”; NLT - “understanding”

αἴσθησις (*aisthēsis*) – perception, insight, power of moral discrimination & ethical judgment

**Complete Word Study Dictionary:**

“Contrast *epignōsis*, the insight obtained by penetrating knowledge, going down to the foundation. *Aisthēsis*, however, *is experiential knowledge* which is or becomes naturally manifold, and therefore has the addition of *pása*, (all)”

As we grow in our walk with Christ, we combine both knowledge and insight, our experiences through our senses – describing almost a 6<sup>th</sup> sense that we have as Christians – the Holy Spirit reminding us!

**Notice that there is a reason for this. Not just that our love would abound, not just that our love would be shaped more and more by knowledge or discernment – see the “so that” v. 10...**

“.... so that you may **APPROVE** what is excellent ...”  
(Philippians 1:10a)

**Verb comparison different versions:**

NIV: “**discern** what is best” / NRSV: “**determine** what is best”

the assayer of precious metals – prove by testing (3 tests):  
- touchstone - rub a cloth w/chemical, turns color, accurate 20/1000  
- x-ray fluorescence - looks inside, doesn't destroy, acc. 10/1000  
- fire assay - most accurate, melt down, spin around, separate out  
ASSAY - to prove by testing, not approve “I like it” “stamp approval”

To approve what is excellent is really **Quality Control!**

**Roc's Example at GM:** (1) R&R – repeat and reliability, (2) dimensional test, (3) PPAP – Part Product Approval Process  
**Regular testing.** If anything tests bad, whole process stops until they can figure out what went wrong. Fix first, then go back.

**Initial testing** – new parts every year, 1<sup>st</sup> 1200 parts – test every one! This takes 2 months! Then into production, 10,000 parts/wk.

**Apply to our Christian lives: testing everything, regular checks**

**What is excellent:** subtle difference between good and best. Latin: ex bonis optima. More than just “best” (NIV) but... *the essential things, the things that matter or are of greater value*; Focus on what matters!

**Illustration: Story of Ben Schwartzwalder (1909-1993)** - Played center W.Va 1930, weighed only 146 lbs. Coached H.S. football 7 yrs. (6 yrs W.Va, 1 yr. Ohio Canton McKinley), won 2 state championships. Joined army in 1941 (paratrooper 82nd airborne)[choice ex bonis optima] earned distinction Battle of Normandy. His unit suffered 65% loss. He led as captain - earned Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, 4 battle stars, Presidential Unit Citation. Became college coach - Syracuse 25 yrs - Reputation for (1) running backs - Ernie Davis, Jim Brown, Floyd Little, Jim Nance, Larry Csonka (2) reputation for recruiting and developing black players in racially segregated times. [ex bonis optima]  
**In 1959 Syracuse, undefeated, faced all-white U of Texas in Cotton.**

## PLAY “Halftime Speech” Movie Clip [1:00]

“Winning this one means nothing if you lose yourselves.” Coach Schwartwalder had a knowledge and a perception that there was more to the game of life than the game of football. You can almost hear the Apostle Paul also saying to you in Philippians: “Don’t give this one away. Hold onto it [ex bonis optima] for yourselves and for everyone around you. It’s here. It’s right here. And no one can take it from you if you don’t give it up.”

“... and so be **PURE** ... for the day of Christ ...” (Phil. 1:10b)

εἰλικρινής (*eilikrinēs*) – literally “sun – judged”; morally spotless, pure – hold fabric up to the sun – did stain come out?

“Pure” ESV, NIV, NLT... “Sincere” KJV, NKJV, NET **Why Sincere?**

**The “cracked pot”:** Ancient Rome, fine pottery, thin/fragile, develop cracks in fire. Fill cracks with wax, paint over. But melt when filled with hot. Hold up to sun, see wax. Reputable dealers would stamp “sin cera,” meaning “without wax” – hence “sincere.”

We want to continuously test our lives so that we arrive at “the day of Christ” pure and sincere, without cracks, without stain... authentic, proving what is “best” so we might be 100% Christ!

“... and so be ... **BLAMELESS** for the day of Christ, ...”  
(Philippians 1:10c)

ἀπρόσκοποι (a– not’/ pros – “to, towards, with” / kopoy – “strike, trip”) = not to strike one’s foot; not to stumble; literally “unstumbled”. Not to trip over our own consciences, not to stumble over our hearts. See Psalm 91:12, Romans 9:32, John 11:9 for ref. to stumble.

We don’t want to arrive on the day of Christ, **with a stubbed toe** – nor do we want to cause anyone else to stumble. – **BLAMELESS!**

“... filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ...”  
(Philippians 1:11a)

Who does the filling? *filled with is* **Passive – God fills us!** We don’t fill ourselves. God fills us. Important concept. What are we to do? Test, prove, know God, experience God through life. Learn a depth of perception that teaches me that there is more to “best” than I can always see. More to the game than the game! While I’m doing that, God does the filling of the fruit of right living.

Who produces the fruit? **Therefore, God produces the fruit!** It comes through my relationship with Jesus Christ. **Why? Purpose?**

“... to the glory and praise of God.” (Philippians 1:11b)

**“For from him and through him and to him are all things.” Romans 11:36 ESV**

**“Source, Guide, and Goal of all that is.” Romans 11:36 NEB**

**CONCLUSION: Personal Story from week.** This has been a week of opposites, of extremes of emotions. On one extreme was the birth of my sixth granddaughter, Lila Eliana, to Jonathan and Bethany. Weighing 6 pounds, 8 ounces, she is perfect and healthy. I just love holding her and smelling her! She is filled with potential with what she could become.

Then there was also the tragic loss of Jason Pryor, a great friend of several of our congregants, only 29 years old, filled with life and optimism. Diagnosed with rare and aggressive form of cancer on Memorial Day and dies nine days later!

I left the hospital room where I was holding Lila to go to the calling hours of Jason down in Johnsville. The church there was crowded with family and friends. Most were talking about Jason and their experiences with him. I thought as I listened to stories that everyone was talking about the ex bonis optima of Jason's life - the things that mattered, the essential things, what was "best" and "excellent" about Jason.

As I drove home I thought first of Lila and how I wanted the ex bonis optima for her. But then it occurred to me that we are all born and we are all destined to die - some sooner some later - but how many of our minutes of life do we really think about the ex bonis optima - the things that make life important, the most valued, that which is excellent.

This prayer is a prayer for the ex bonis optima... and it's something that we should want for ourselves and something that we should want for everybody else. We pray this model prayer for everyone we know... that we arrive pure and blameless at the day of Christ, filled with the good deeds, the fruit of God, that He has accomplished through us. That on that day, our lives will have meant something special for God and for His kingdom. Is that your prayer? It is my prayer for each of you. Let's pray.