

Philippians:

Grateful Prayer for Gospel Partners

Intro

What are you thankful for? Make a list in your head.

Gospel partnership should generate thankfulness and promote prayer

Philippians 1:3-11 ESV [3] I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, [4] always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, [5] because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. [6] And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. [7] It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. [8] For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. [9] And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, [10] so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, [11] filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

*Posture
in
Prayer*

*Commentary
+
Thoughts*

*Context
of
Prayer*

** Save 6-7 until next week*

** Opening of letter → sender, recipient, greeting + prayer*

The Posture of Paul in Praying 3-5, 7-8

Paul is thankful

[3] I THANK MY GOD IN ALL MY REMEMBRANCE OF YOU,

What are you thankful for? List five.

→ INTRO

Fee: "Paul, after all, rarely thanks God for "things"; his thanksgivings are for people, for those special "gifts" whom God has brought into his life, who, despite whatever frustration or grief they may cause him, are invariably a source of great joy and thanksgiving."

25 occurrences of thanks, 20 referred to people

Paul's thankfulness is triggered by his thinking about the Philippians, but his thankfulness is established and stabilized by God's sovereignty – even in his imprisonment/trials/testifying ⇒ SUFFERING

Staff meeting prayer topics → Thank God for gospel partners

Paul is joyful

[4] ALWAYS IN EVERY PRAYER OF MINE FOR YOU ALL MAKING MY PRAYER WITH JOY

Epistle of joy – joy/rejoice 16 times

Joy = a deep-seated confidence and delight in God that transcends circumstances

Paul:

- Prays for them with joy (1:4)
- Anticipates returning to them for their joy (1:25)
- His joy will be completed if the Philippians adopt the same mindset as Christ Jesus Himself (2:2)

- Instructs the Philippians to receive Epaphroditus back 'with all joy' (2:29)
- Refers to the Philippians as "my joy and crown, whom I long for (4:1)
- Rejoices (1:18; 2:17; 4:10) or calls others to rejoice (3:1; 4:4) both at the same time (2:17-18)!

The Purpose of Paul in Praying 9-11

[9] AND IT IS MY PRAYER THAT YOUR LOVE MAY ABOUND MORE AND MORE, WITH KNOWLEDGE AND ALL DISCERNMENT, [10] SO THAT YOU MAY APPROVE WHAT IS EXCELLENT, AND SO BE PURE AND BLAMELESS FOR THE DAY OF CHRIST, [11] FILLED WITH THE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT COMES THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, TO THE GLORY AND PRAISE OF GOD.

Paul prays that their knowledgeable and discerning love may abound

Biblical love abounds - it is a growing, overflowing phenomenon

Biblical love is knowledgeable (an innate knowing that comes from experiences and relationship)

Biblical love is discerning (differentiating between right and wrong, good and bad, wise and foolish)

1. This is a growing intimacy that requires facts and experience

2. This is a spiritual work of God – that's why it is prayed for

3. This is far from naivete : • *not based simply on wavering feelings*
 • *not based on preferable circumstances*
 • *solid as rock + hard as steel*

Goal: So that, they may approve what is excellent

Harmon: "As biblical love abounds more and more in knowledge and all discernment, it enables believers to recognize, embrace, and follow God's good and acceptable and perfect will."

Luke 12:34 ESV [34] For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. DIAGNOSTIC

- **ESV:** This concluding proverb (Luke 12:34) emphasizes the importance of the disposition of one's heart, which throughout Scripture represents the center of one's being and one's deepest desires, including one's reason, convictions, emotions, and will. The nature of one's heart is reflected in the things that one values most.

Result: So that, they may be pure and blameless

Pure = unmixed

① discerning love abounds

② we can differentiate and embrace God's will

Blameless = without fault

③ results in purity

Approving excellent things results in inward and outward purity

A discerning knowledgeable heart will love what is appropriate

Abounding, discerning, knowledgeable love results in approving what is excellent which leads to progressive holiness which will be completed at the return of Christ!

Theologian J E connects the ideas of abounding love + holiness

Love is a sign of holiness

Jonathan Edwards - But what makes up holiness in the creature?

What is the mark in a person's life that he or she is growing in it? Love, of course, since it is the full scope and summary of all true virtue.

The Source of Gratitude

[3] I THANK MY GOD ... [5] BECAUSE OF YOUR PARTNERSHIP IN THE GOSPEL FROM THE FIRST DAY UNTIL NOW ... [7] IT IS RIGHT FOR ME TO FEEL THIS WAY ABOUT YOU ALL, BECAUSE I HOLD YOU IN MY HEART, FOR YOU ARE ALL PARTAKERS WITH ME OF GRACE, BOTH IN MY IMPRISONMENT AND IN THE DEFENSE AND CONFIRMATION OF THE GOSPEL.

Bernhard – "I don't like you, but I'll go to war with you." He viewed the new guy through football teammate lenses. He could value him as a teammate despite not liking him.

Paul views people through gospel lenses. They have received the gospel; they have received grace. And therefore, he can be thankful for them.

This is not a trick – imagining people in their underwear...this is seeing people as they truly are!

↳ move to application

Commentator: Paul's idea of partnership is gospel-centered and Christ focused.

Believers cannot partner with unbelievers in this way: **2 Corinthians 6:14 ESV** [14] Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?

→ Paul differentiates between believers & non-believers

→ we recoil at this

→ we are separated because of? Nothing in you:

→ the difference is CHRIST + THE GOSPEL

- race
- culture
- ethnicity
- economic
- education

But the power of the gospel is seen in its ability to transform our minds so that we not only understand why we should be thankful for other Christians, but also causes us to love them. And truly be thankful for them.

Paul is affectionate

[7] IT IS RIGHT FOR ME TO FEEL THIS WAY ABOUT YOU ALL, BECAUSE I HOLD YOU IN MY HEART, FOR YOU ARE ALL PARTAKERS WITH ME OF GRACE, BOTH IN MY IMPRISONMENT AND IN THE DEFENSE AND CONFIRMATION OF THE GOSPEL. [8] FOR GOD IS MY WITNESS, HOW I YEARN FOR YOU ALL WITH THE AFFECTION OF CHRIST JESUS.

"Feel this way about you," "Hold you in my heart," "Yearn for you"

→ the gospel enables us to love ⇒ we can't do this apart from Christ's GOSPEL - Only Christ can reconcile us to each other

The Ultimate Aim of Prayer

[9] AND IT IS MY PRAYER THAT YOUR LOVE MAY ABOUND MORE AND MORE, WITH KNOWLEDGE AND ALL DISCERNMENT, [10] SO THAT YOU MAY APPROVE WHAT IS EXCELLENT, AND SO BE PURE AND BLAMELESS FOR THE DAY OF CHRIST, [11] FILLED WITH THE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT COMES THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, TO THE GLORY AND PRAISE OF GOD.

Jonathan Edwards: "The end of creation is that the creation might glorify [God]."

As we abound in love that is both discerning and knowledgeable, which results in our approval of what is excellent, which leads to purity and blamelessness, as we are filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes from Christ, we ultimately glorify God which is what we are created to do!

Application

1. See gospel partners with gospel lenses
2. Consider gospel partners with gratitude
3. Pray for gospel partners that their "love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment"

* PICK ONE GOSPEL PARTNER *

- * This is not a trick - public speaking *
- * We look at each other through Christ + the Cross
- * We see gospel-partners as those Christ died for
- * We see their shortcomings as sins that are like our own
- * We see their strong points as evidences of God's grace
- * We need this!!!