

## "Good... Better... or Best?" Philippians 1:9-11

So often when we pray we ask God for things that are good, and yet overlook those things that are truly essential. So Paul teaches us in this short passage how to pray for our two most essential needs in life. He prays that we would grow in love for God, for one another, and for the lost; not love as our world sees it, but agape love that sacrifices self for the good of others. And he prays that we would grow to understand God and His Word more deeply and grow in wise discernment of His will. As God answers these two essential needs in our individual lives and in our church, we become a people who greatly glorify God in this world.

### **What do you Pray for?**

Philippians

How to live as good citizens of heaven while on earth

- vv1-2 Our new Identity
- vv3-8 Our new Occupation
- vv9-11 How to Pray

### **Our Essential Needs**

1. To Grow in Love

—1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

—Matthew 5:43-45

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"

—John 15:13

"Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."

Love is a choice to so highly value another that you sacrifice self for their good

- Not based on my feelings
- Not based on their worth
  
- Pray for it
- Let go of obstacles – past hurts, disappointments, jealousy, envy

## 2. To Grow in Knowledge and Discernment

- *epignosis* – to know by experience; to understand
- discernment – capacity to make wise choices
  
- Pray for it
- Immerse yourself in God’s Word – read, memorize, study

Let love grow in knowledge

1. Because they feed each other
  - Love fuels a desire to know
  - Knowledge fuels love
2. Because one without the other is dangerous
  - Knowledge without love = dry ditch
  - Love without knowledge = destructive flood

### **Three Results**

- We choose what’s best (10a)
- We’ll be rewarded by Jesus (10b)
- God is glorified (11)

—John 13:35

“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

### **This Week**

Pray for you, your family, our church...

1. To grow in self-giving love for God, one another, and the lost
2. To grow in knowledge of God and discernment of His will