

Love-Based Righteousness: Beauty and Freedom (Phil. 1:9-11)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Philippians 1:9-11 is a prayer for our spiritual life, family members, spouse, children, churches, etc. This passage provides us with a concise overview of the nature of Christianity. Paul prayed for the believers to abound in love in the face of persecution, criticism, and temptation (1:9-11, 27-29). He prayed for three things to *increase* in their lives (v. 9)—*love, knowledge, and discernment*. Next, he described *the result* (v. 10)—our lives are filled with the fruits of righteousness.

⁹*This I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,*
¹⁰*that you may approve [see and stand for] the things that are excellent...*¹¹*being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (Phil. 1:9-11)*

- B. Paul connected “abounding love” with walking in a lifestyle of righteousness. A righteous lifestyle flows from “love-based obedience” (Jn. 15:14). It is the result of encountering the “God who is abounding love” and seeing the beauty, liberty, and excellence of Jesus’ leadership and commands. All of God’s commands are motivated by love. They produce love in us *as we embrace them*.

²¹*He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. (Jn. 14:21)*

²*In that day the Branch of the LORD [the Messiah] shall be beautiful and glorious... (Isa. 4:2)*

- C. Jesus loves us with all His heart. Thus out of gratitude we seek to love Him with all of our heart. Our decisions to obey Him express our love for Him. Though costly, it does not earn us His love.

- D. *Excellent*: The beauty and bright righteousness that Jesus possesses is what He imparts to His people (Isa. 61:3; 62:1). We proclaim the compelling beauty of righteousness with its liberty.

³*...to give them beauty for ashes...they may be called trees of righteousness... (Isa. 61:3)*

¹*For Zion’s sake I will not hold My peace...until her righteousness goes forth as brightness... (Isa. 62:1)*

- E. One of primary lies being promoted today is that God’s commands are burdensome, harsh, out of reach, confining, and cause us to lose out on real life as they hold us in religious bondage and contradict true love. Also, that is not important to walk in righteousness because of “grace” and that hunger for righteousness is harmful by making us proud or religious and is a sign of legalism.

³*For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. (1 Jn. 5:3-4)*

⁶*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. (Mt. 5:6)*

- F. David prophesied that the nations would rise up against Jesus’ leadership, seeing His commands as if they were “bonds” that enslave them and “cords” that bind them to God’s “outdated” morality.

²*The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD... saying,*³*“Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.” (Ps. 2:1-3)*

- G. **Your love may abound:** In praying that we would abound in love, we are asking the Spirit to inspire us in three ways: for greater understanding of God’s love for us; for the Spirit to tenderize our hearts so that we abound in love for Jesus; and to cause love to overflow in us for others.
1. “Abounding love” describes God’s personality, what the cross accomplished, and what godly living really is. Righteousness is about love. Sin is an enemy of our destiny, liberty, and joy.
 2. One reason that God hates sin is because He loves you and your liberty, and He loves LOVE.
- H. **In knowledge:** Love grows in us as we receive more knowledge of gospel truths, with a focus on the knowledge of God’s personality and the finished work of the cross. Increasing in the knowledge of God is necessary for us to grow in abounding in love and walking in righteousness.
- I. We are set free by knowing gospel truths (Jn. 8:32)—a right view of God’s heart and righteousness is vital. Many have emphasized that “*right believing results in right living.*” Walking godly begins with believing the right things about God’s personality, the cross, and the excellence of obedience.
- J. **That you may approve (recognize) the things that are excellent:** Spiritual discernment gives us the ability to see what God calls excellent. He esteems righteousness as excellent. What God calls excellent is at the center of the debate in the Church. Studies tell us that many “millennials” (those under 30) define love, truth, and justice by *what they feel is right*, without reference to God’s Word.
- K. **Being filled with the fruits of righteousness:** This includes the *gift* of righteousness that is to lead us to a *lifestyle* of righteousness. Simply put, *filled with righteousness* speaks of “the rightness of God’s Word” applied practically in our life—our money, words, sexuality, time, etc.
- L. **Glory of God:** Glimpses of Jesus’ excellence and beauty can be seen as God’s people walk out “love-based” righteousness. Paul viewed obedience to Jesus as leading us into God’s glorious master plan that is good, pleasing, and perfect, thus giving *proof* of what is excellent (Rom. 12:2).
²***And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable [pleasing] and perfect will of God. (Rom. 12:1-2)***
- M. Whoever does and teaches God’s commands will be *called great* in the age to come (Mt. 5:19). The life choices of the wise will be *called great* by the Lord Himself.
¹⁹***Whoever...breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least...but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom. (Mt. 5:19)***
- N. The Lord’s plan will greatly succeed as multitudes love Him, proclaim His wisdom, and walk in purity in the midst of the intense pressures in end times (Dan. 11:33; 12:3, 10; Rev 7:9, 14). Many will say yes to love, break free of their bondages, and experience God’s power in their struggles. They will see that it is *doable* to live in obedience in the face of temptation and persecution.
³***Those who are wise shall shine...those who turn many to righteousness like the stars...***
¹⁰***Many shall be purified, made white, and refined...the wise shall understand. (Dan. 12:3, 10)***
⁹***“...a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne...¹⁴These...come out of the great tribulation.” (Rev. 7:9-14)***