

CONVERSATION GUIDE:

OPENING QUESTIONS:

- What is the difference between knowledge and wisdom in your experience?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the relationship between love and knowledge in the Christian life? How do they work together?
- How is love as defined by our culture different than how the Scriptures define it?
- How is love in our culture reflective of how the Bible defines it?
- How do we cultivate the kind of overflowing love Paul prays for in our own lives and church?
- What are some hard "discernment choices" in our world today? What does it mean to "approve what is excellent" in today's world? How do we make those choices?
- How does focusing on "the day of Christ" affect how we live today?

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

- Spend time studying God's Word to grow in knowledge and love.
- Practice discernment in one challenging decision.
- Invest in a friendship with another believer this week.

GROUP FOCUS:

- Look for ways to grow in knowledge and love of Christ with one another.
- Ask others for wisdom in daily choices and relationships you are facing.

PRAYER FOCUS:

- Thank God for the gift of Christian fellowship.
- Ask God to show you where you are separating wisdom from knowledge, or knowledge from wisdom.
- Thank Jesus for His encouragement and grace.



WEEK 6 STILL JOYFULLY PRAYING IN AFFECTION (PHILIPPIANS 1:7-11)

TODAY'S VERSES:

Philippians 1:9-11	Philippians 2:17	Galatians 5:22-23
Philippians 1:3-11	Ephesians 1:17	John 15:5 & 8
2 Corinthians 7:3	Colossians 1:9-10	Philippians 2:10

FEBRUARY 16, 2025

WEEK 6

STILL JOYFULLY PRAYING IN AFFECTION

There is a lot in today's message as we explore Paul's deep affection for the Philippian church and his prayer for their spiritual growth. There are three types of affection Paul demonstrates and four aspects of prayer for the church. Paul's relationship with the Philippians exemplifies true gospel partnership, showing how Christian love combines deep affection with growing knowledge and wisdom.

Affection:

- *A willingness to sacrifice* – Paul and the Philippians model for us what it means to have true friendships centered on the Gospel. It involves a willingness to sacrifice.
- *Appropriate Affection* – A partner in grace meant more than simply saving grace; Paul means they share together in making the Gospel known to the world. Through his suffering, the power of the Gospel was put on display.
- *Christ's Affection* – The Greek word translated "affection" refers to the inward parts of the body.

Paul is united in Christ; they are united in Jesus. It brings a deep love that goes beyond sentiment. When we have an understanding of our assurance of salvation, deep relationships, and see our reconciliation to God (that we get to enjoy Him forever), we find joy.

Prayer:

- *Growing Love* – The word for abound means to be over and above what you were thinking. Vertical love first (God), horizontal love second (others). Paul prays that the Philippians' love would overflow all dimensions in an ongoing, limitless love.

- *Knowledge and Discernment* (insight or wisdom) – Knowledge gives us a lot of information, but wisdom is how we live out that knowledge in practical ways that honors others - and most importantly - honors God. Paul wants us to have a greater knowledge of God because the more we know of God, the more reason we will have to love Him.
 - *Approving what is best* (excellent) - Markus Bockmuehl describes this as "*the Spirit-bred ability to discern that which God has already marked off as essential or 'superlative' regarding life in Christ.*" This ability includes not only distinguishing right from wrong, but also the best from second best.
-
-
-

- *Prayer for "the day of Christ."* - Christian growth was not an end in itself, but had an eye to the grand goal of when we stand before Jesus. So he says:
 1. *Pure and blameless.* "Pure" means "unmixed," as in unmixed substances.
 2. *Filled with the fruit of righteousness.* This comes through Jesus.
 3. *To the praise and glory of God.* This is what is called a "doxology" – a rehearsed way to give praise and glory to God.

Paul concludes not just the prayer, but the paragraph with, "amen." John Piper says, "*All who cast themselves on God find that they are carried into endless joy by God's omnipotent commitment to his own glory.*"
