

# That your love may abound (Quality: Average)

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Date: 14 December 1999

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[ 0 : 00 ] As the Lord is graciously pleased to help and to bless, I venture to speak from his word as it is found in the epistle to the Philippians, the first chapter, really in the ninth verse.

The prayer of the apostle for the Philippians, reading from verse 8 to verse 11, the first chapter of the epistle to the Philippians.

For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, that ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.

Especially verse 9 and chapter 1 in the epistle to the Philippians. What joy this must have brought to the church at Philippi, to have this epistle from Paul, the apostle, in prison, a hundred miles, a thousand miles, a thousand miles away in Rome, sent to them.

[ 1 : 45 ] To know that this great man of God was praying this for them. Surely they must have had much confidence in the receiving the answer to these prayers.

If Paul prayed for them, that their love might abound yet more and more, then surely that would be. He was such a man of prayer.

They may well have found that he could pray so much more effectively than they could. And it is a great comfort to have men of God, their prayers for us.

But not only so, surely the apostle Paul was an example to these believers at Philippi.

This was what they greatly needed. We may be sure that it is what each one of us is needed if we are born of God.

[ 3 : 00 ] We so need, so greatly need, our love to be increased more and more, to abound.

And the apostle so had this upon his heart to pray for, for one church after another. When he exhorted the church at Thessalonica, to love one another, and indeed you do it.

But I beseech you to do it more and more. In the same way he exhorted them to love one another more and more.

As here he prayed for the Philippians, that their love might increase. And surely some of them must have felt we haven't prayed for this enough.

There is the apostle in his prison at Rome, constantly praying for us, this way. Surely we so need to pray like this ourselves.

[ 4 : 17 ] This is a tremendous blessing. It is singled out in the word of God as being so valuable.

We do so need, so need the love of God. Not only the experience of it, but the practice of it, the exercise of it in our own hearts.

We so need that our love might abound yet more and more. For who could possibly say that he or she has enough?

We need more and more. Do we pray for this? Is it constantly upon our hearts as it was with the apostle? He could say, God is my record.

God is my record. How greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. Deep in his heart there was this affection, this love of Christ for this church and people.

[ 5 : 32 ] So that he prayed for them. That they too might know more and more of this love. And not only that, but action is often needed.

In this church of Philippi were two people. We only know their names.

As they are given to us later in this epistle. As he says in the fourth chapter of the epistle.

Euodius and Syntyche. Now this epistle was written by the apostle. And sent all the way to Philippi.

There is no doubt that many of the church there could not read themselves. So the epistle was read to them all.

[ 6 : 38 ] There was only one copy. It was read to them all as they were gathered together. Can you imagine the scene? And then suddenly in the epistle.

The apostle comes. The reader of the epistle. The pastor there comes to this point. The inspired apostle had said. Therefore my brethren.

Dearly beloved and longed for. My joy and crown. So stand fast in the Lord. My dearly beloved. Then these two people would hear.

Their names read out. In front of the whole church. It wasn't a reproof.

It was a very tender word of entreaty. Addressed to them each. He says.

[ 7 : 41 ] I beseech you, Euodius. And I beseech, Syntyche. Could they be of the same mind. In the Lord. Obviously they were not.

And the apostle. All those miles away in Rome. Knew that they were not. News. Letters. Travelled slowly in those days.

Over land and sea. This was obviously. A long standing difference. No doubt these people. These two sat far apart.

But. I like to think that after. Reading. After this epistle was read. They sat together again.

When he entreated them. In this tender way. He said. No more than that. I entreat. Euodius. And entreat. Syntyche. That they be of the same mind.

[ 8 : 41 ] In the Lord. That was all. But surely that was enough. You see dear friends.

While they were separated. Love was not abounding. It couldn't have been. That needed to be dealt with.

And often in those cases. Neither of the people. Is willing to take the first step. And yet. How important it is.

So. There is need. For attention. To such things as those. Is there anybody. In our lives. Any of us. From whom we are separated.

The people of God. Because. Of some difference. There needs. There needs. There needs.

[ 9 : 43 ]

Sometimes. Action. To be taken. The apostle says. In this. Previous epistle. To the Ephesians. let all bitterness he says grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice that needs to be put away first and then he says and be ye kind one to another tender hearted forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you be ye therefore followers of God as dear children and walk in love as Christ also hath loved us and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor but first he says that these things this bitterness this anger this malice all this evil speaking all these things which interfere which present barriers all these things are to be set aside first and then he says and this I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment the subject then is praying for more love praying for abounding love first of all there is a basis for this a basis for praying like this the apostle knew that some of these people knew this church well he had been the instrument in God's hand in establishing this church and he loved the people very dearly there were two things clearly for a basis for this prayer there was the work of the Lord Jesus Christ five times already in this epistle by the ninth verse five times he has been mentioned by name and twice more in the prayer

Jesus Christ his work was the whole foundation for their hope of something of peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ and of the love of God toward them through this blessed person it was a sound foundation for saying this he couldn't say this to every of everybody some might need first of all a great change but these people had already been established in the truth as it is in Jesus and he could write to them on these lines and pray for them like this their love had already begun he wanted it to be increased and abound and there was a second reason why he could pray like this why there was a sound basis for doing so he was conscious that God had begun a good work in their hearts by the Holy Spirit as he just says just before being confident of this very thing that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus

Christ God never begins a good work and then leaves it never leaves it unfinished if he has begun he will continue it he will perfect it we may be certain of that and the apostle was persuaded he was confident that a good work had been begun by the spirit of God in the hearts of these Philippians he was conscious that they had known a good beginning and he was confident that the Lord who had done this would continue would perfect that work which he himself had begun so that on these two grounds the work of the saviour at Calvary and the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart the apostle could then pray like this and this

I pray that your love may abound yet more and more here is the crux of his prayer your love he must have been sure there was some love already given that the God of love had given them some love already they knew what this love meant as he says before that he had them in his heart in as much as both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel all are partakers of my grace or as the margin says partakers with me of grace fellow partakers of grace with the apostle as he had he had loved had begun to love from his heart which once had been so much at enmity with God so they also had begun to love he could speak of their love it may have been small but it was real and they had demonstrated that love time and again by sending the apostle a present somehow with his upkeep time and again he says they sent to his necessity and that was surely one of the main reasons why he wrote this epistle to them to thank them for what they had sent they had shown their love but he wanted it to increase love your love he was not speaking of natural affection which we all have we are all made with that ability to love love with that not exactly a faculty but that propensity for love we all know what love is we all surely know what it is to love in a natural way but this is spiritual love

God is a spirit they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth love in their hearts and the Lord Jesus himself so summarized the gospel in those two great commandments these really are gospel commandments although he summarized the law in that way when they asked him master which is the greatest commandment of the law he said hear O Israel the Lord thy God is one Lord and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul with all thy heart with all thy mind with all thy strength this is the first and greatest commandment and the second is like unto it thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself on these hang all the law and the prophets the saviour so brought the commandments of God down to these two great commandments commandments of love we read in the epistle of

[ 18 : 56 ] James that love is the fulfilling of the law now we cannot possibly keep the law fulfill the commandments with regard to salvation and life we have broken the law we cannot possibly keep it in its purity in its entirety or anything like but the Lord Jesus has done that he has fulfilled the law magnified the law and made it honourable for salvation his work alone stands but the law of God remains this holy law of love shines through these epistles it is for his dear people to observe and this love which is so commended to us in the epistles this love is the whole of the gospel as far as obedience to the commandments of God is concerned the Lord

Jesus said in his last tender discourses to his disciples this is my commandment that ye love one another as I have loved you love to God love to his people is so indelibly described inscribed in the word of God it is so exalted above all other commands when the apostle writes to the Colossian believers about many precious graces they were to put it on he says put on therefore as the elect of God holy and beloved bowels of mercy humbleness of mind meekness long suffering forbearing one another and forgiving one another and so on and above all these things above all these things put on charity or love which is the bond of perfectness this love is so precious love to

God first that is the first commandment love to him supremely that is so expressed in the word walk in love as Christ also hath loved us and hath given himself for us as he walked so his people are to walk in some tiny measure after his perfect example to walk by his grace to walk in love and dear friends how much need there is therefore for this prayer for surely we all come so very far short in these matters when we really face the great commandments of God and realize how it is with us surely we come so far short of loving the Lord

God with all our hearts and all our soul and all our strength and all our mind always how we do need that spirit of love the Holy Spirit to teach us this great lesson that our love might abound yet more and more it is not only love to God as we read in the first epistle of John and as is evident in other parts of the world so often there is so much emphasis on this loving one another as the Lord Jesus singled out that commandment for his own dear disciples when he was about to leave them they had sometimes disputed and quarreled amongst themselves they had failed in that commandment of love one to another before but we don't read of any of those disputes afterward he commanded them to love one another after his example he says as I have loved you what an example that was but by his grace they did follow that example there was love between the apostles after the saviour's resurrection they were found all together in one place they were united in prayer they so needed the

Holy Spirit to descend upon them that spirit of love and of peace not only was there love to God but love to his people as we so read in the gospel the epistle the first epistle of John he says again and again on those lines of loving the brethren he points it out as a distinct and definite and clear mark of those who have passed from death unto life he says we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren do you love them the people of God how plain it is in the word of God we read in the

[ 25 : 39 ] Hebrews that short but pithy exhortation let brotherly love continue we have it so expressed in one epistle after another how we do need the Holy Spirit to enable us to fulfill the commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ for his glory to follow in the footsteps of the Son of God himself who showed such an example of perfect love to God and to man this then really is the crux of the whole matter your love your love how is it we are apt

I suppose very much to judge our feelings our love by our level of feelings feelings are not so much love itself as an evidence of it as the effect of love certainly love is associated very closely associated with warm feelings as we know that when we read of the measure of love the love of God himself it is expressed in another way in the giving of love what love will give what God's love gave that is how it is to be appreciated God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son the greatest gift that ever could be given it was the measure of the most wonderful love that ever there was and the apostle

John says if God so loved us we ought also to love one another he says beloved that is not love in word or in tongue but in deed and in truth it is to be the practical evidence and expression of that love what love will do what love will give the Lord in his word so expresses that love so expresses his desire his command for his children he says very simply my son give me thine heart heart and because many use such expressions lightly there is no reason why we should not use them at all he says that to his children my son give me thine heart have you ever come there my gracious

God take what thou wilt but teach me to resign thou art our mighty all may we give our whole selves O Lord to thee for his direction for his will to be ordered and commanded love gives well the apostle there speaks of your love your love the love of the children of God it may be small at times it may be very much stifled in this world in this cold world with all the temptations and difficulties and our own sinful nature but where there are believers as there were at Philippi the apostle could say your love and he desired and prayed that your love may increase there is the increase of this love surely there is much cause for this even if your love is as a burning fire it will not necessarily stay like that not unless the Lord so graciously gives more love maintains that love that fire of love as a burning fire as a burning love to him and to his people when we read of the apostles love like this how greatly

I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ in those deep tender feelings of love like the savior himself in how much love we need how much we need this increase the apostle expresses it very emphatically I pray that your love may abound may be more and more this really means to fill to overflowing the psalmist says my cup runneth over a heart full of love and overflowing with love that is what the apostle desired for each of these Philippian believers that it might be so and it may be so we may be sure that the apostle had a right view of these things that it really is possible and most desirable that the love the people of God might overflow might be full to overflowing then he also says more and more he uses this expression in other epistles too he was the sort of man who was never satisfied with the little nor even satisfied with the lot he always wanted more of these things it is quite safe to say that none of us has too much ever not too much of this love we can never while we live have too much of it alas so often we have far too little and so there is much cause for this prayer this increase the apostle had great desires for these

[ 33 : 27 ] Philippians whom he loved he wanted their love to abound yet more and more there is no limit here no restriction their love may increase more and more and that is the prospect before the people of God we may be sure as the Philippians in their day could be sure that what the apostle had asked God would graciously answer perhaps not altogether in this life but ultimately their love would increase and abound more and more and how desirable that is love love is the essence of Christianity it is the crown of all the graces it is the essential the absolute necessity of the

Christian life and the obedience of faith so there is this increase of love desired presented before us in the apostles prayer I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment knowledge that is of course spiritual knowledge knowledge of God of the Lord Jesus Christ and through him knowledge of the Father for the love of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit is equal boundless infinite love now this love and this knowledge so to speak go forward together it is evident that in our lives we do not love anybody whom we do not know where there is no knowledge there can be no love where there is knowledge there may or may not be love it all depends on the character the personality of the one who is known but in the case of God himself and his beloved son there is no doubt whatever that when he is known he will be loved when there is this knowledge of this person of the

Lord Jesus Christ he is the altogether lovely one there is everything in him to be loved and that to an infinite extent to the highest possible degree there is all that can be loved in him he is holy and just and good he is full of tender sympathy of rich mercy of absolute faithfulness of wisdom and power the hymn writer says all over glorious is my Lord must be beloved and adored it's worth if all the nations knew sure the whole world would love him too if that was the will of

God that it should be so the hymn writer views it in that way to know it is because people do not know because they are so ignorant foolish and sinful they do not have this vital spiritual knowledge it is for that reason they do not know the Lord they do not love him but where there is this spiritual knowledge there will be love Jesus said in his prayer to his father this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent that is eternal life we may be sure that that love that knowledge does go along with love how we do need to know the savior more to have him revealed to us more and more that we may love him more and more and love his people too his knowledge which is so greatly needed and then also this love should be in judgment or in discernment the margin here says that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and in all sense or in all discernment love needs to have discernment there are those things which need to be discerned and that direction of the Holy

Spirit is to this end when the apostle writes in the last chapter of this epistle whatsoever things are true whatsoever things are honest whatsoever things are just whatsoever things are pure whatsoever things are lovely whatsoever things are of good report if there be any virtue and if there be any praise things are these things now they need to be discerned there are many things in this world which are not worth thinking about but there are those which are those are the things the apostle by the spirit counsels us to think upon think on these things there are those good things to be discerned to be singled out to be loved and to be meditated upon and so the apostle prays like this and there are those effects which follow which follow increasing love love in knowledge and in discernment or judgment there are those things which follow we haven't time to go into those the apostle says and this I pray that your love may yet abound may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment that she may approve things that are excellent that she may be sincere and without offense till the day of

[ 41 : 00 ] Christ being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God there are these two further things in view there is to be sincere and without offense that is without falling until the day of Christ that tremendous day is before us all what a mercy it will be to be preserved in this way to be sincere and without offense until that day we knew dear friends we do need to live like this that this love may influence this holy love may so influence all the days of our lives and then there are these fruits of righteousness being filled with the fruits of righteousness to the glory and praise of

God for what desirable ends are in view here with this increasing love this increasing love so that there shall be these two effects of that love in view this blameless life that is as far as outward sins are concerned to be sincere and without offense and also this fruitfulness fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ all by him oh dear friends how we do need our love to increase it is so presented before us time and again in his holy word but this world is a chilling place so much in this world chills love love which is like a beautiful flower a tender plant which cannot stand the frost it is the most delicate and wonderful grace we do so need by the holy spirit that this grace should be preserved and should be kept alive and should be kept warm from the chilling coldness of this sinful world surely you know all too well how it can chill how it can so easily bring us down bring us into a cold and sad condition but it is not always so this apostle especially was an outstanding example of what love can do all the wonder of his life of usefulness surely this love was kept burning in his heart through his life sadly often it is not so surely we have much cause to acknowledge and to mourn that our love has often been cold how we do need the Lord to do this for us is this your prayer it is most surely a suitable prayer a suitable prayer for us all and for one another how important it is how desirable it is that your love that my love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment may the

Lord graciously grant it may be so so the glory of his own great name amen amen m to on

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