



PAUL'S PASSIONATE PRAYER FOR ABOUNDING LOVE AND WISE DISCERNMENT

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God. (Philippians 1:1-11 NIV)

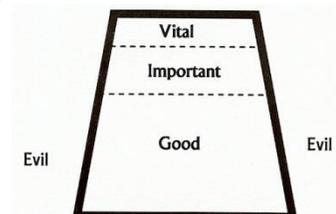
1. Don't miss the obvious here. This is a prayer! He asks God to give love and wisdom to the church, because unless he gives it we will not receive it. That's how desperately needy and foolish we are without him.
2. Pray for the grace of abounding love: "*that your love would abound more and more....*" Sometimes people are very hard to love. Sometimes you are hard to love. Paul is already a thankful recipient of their love, and he prays that their love will mature and abound more and more. Make that your prayer.
3. Pray for the grace of wise discernment.
 - a. wisdom "*together with all the saints*" – We need each other to see clearly.
 - b. wisdom that grows in knowledge (*epignosis*)—super-knowledge, advanced knowledge, ultimate realities of God and the unseen and eternal matters It refers to knowledge of ultimate reality, usually the reality of knowing God, and the unseen and eternal matters we learn from the Bible as the Holy Spirit illumines it to our minds. Biblical love is not mindless but intelligent and informed love—love informed by the whole counsel of God.
 - c. wisdom that discerns truth from falsehood, "*all judgment*" (NIV "*depth of insight*"). This discernment enables you to assess good and bad, right and wrong, and to tell the difference between them.
 - d. wisdom that discerns what is most important right in the present. "*...That you may know and choose the things that are most important, the things that really matter right now.*"
It has to include an understanding of yourself and the situation you are in. I also means keeping a sense of proportion, because some matters in Scripture are more important than others. Don't lose perspective. Remember the most *weighty* matters Paul points us to:

...Stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel....(27)

...Make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. (2:2-3) Do everything without complaining or arguing (2:14). Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. (4:4-5)

[And the greatest command in the entire book (2:5ff)] *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

**Wisdom means that together we discern
the Good from the Evil,
the Important from the Good, and
the Vital from the Important.**



¹ Christian Counseling and Mediation is a service to individuals and churches, and is incorporated in the State of Vermont as a non-profit ministry. This ministry is supported by tax-deductible donations by those who believe in its mission.