

# Light Brings Salt

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## Iron Range Bible Church

*Dedicated to the Systematic Exposition of the Word of God*  
*"Sanctify them in the truth: Your word is truth."*



### What is Love?

Pastor John Griffith

Today we're going to examine Paul's prayer in Philippians 1:9-11. We find here Paul's desire for these believers spelled out very clearly, what he sees as the objective that they should be actively pursuing as growing, advancing believers who are committed to Christ. Read these verses carefully before proceeding.

It may come as a shock to some of you but God did not save you just to keep you from eternal judgment in the LOF, but that the character of Christ, the fruit of the Spirit might be manifest in your lives.

We live in the flesh in this material body but we are to live not of the flesh since the sin nature doesn't have to rule and enslave us any longer.

We are to produce "good works" so that Christ might be glorified in time. Eph 2:10

In this prayer Paul prays for three basic things for them.

- #1 - That their love may abound in full knowledge and discernment.
- #2 - That their lives would be free from hypocrisy, that is genuine, blameless.
- #3 - That they would be filled with the fruit of righteousness.

Today we'll examine the first one which flows from Phil. 1:9 *And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,*

Paul introduces an important purpose of his prayer and its related to love, *that your love.* In referring to love Paul recognizes something as existing in them.

Love in the believer we know is a fruit of the Spirit who indwells every believer and is related to His empowering ministry.

The indwelling of Spirit is related to our position in Christ in that it occurs at salvation and is something that is always true in the life of the believer

His empowering ministry is related to the experiential ministry of the Spirit in the life of the believer - at any point, any moment, is He empowering your life? Are you in fellowship?

This Love, then, that Paul speaks of is the result of the ministry of the H/S in our lives and it refers to a state whereby He enables/empowers us to apply any and all spiritual truth, values, and characteristics properly towards others and our selves.

There is nothing here in the context to limit this love to being directed toward God or to others or to Paul himself.

It is unrestricted in that it refers to a continuing demonstration of the spiritual fruit of love in all directions by the believer.

### SO WHAT IS LOVE?

Need to define love, that is, as viewed from Scripture.

**Love is an attitude that motivates us to do what is best for another, in the light of Word of God [eternity], no matter what it costs you.**

Therefore love is knowing what is right and best for another and doing it, even when you would rather do something else.

The more that I've look at passages dealing with *αγαπη* love, the more convinced I am that *αγαπη* love has absolutely nothing to do with feelings, or emotion. (there will be emotion with it, accompanying it - can't have real love and not appreciate it)

Love is an action that flows from an attitude that says we must do what is best for another, no matter what it costs us.

An attitude that results in action says its a product of ones decisions, the will, not emotions.

Since **God is Love**, one of the numerous characteristics of His essence, that is, that defines who He is, He can never do anything that violates that love, right?

Would you agree then that God can not do anything that is not loving? (that is from his viewpoint)

Look at **Lam. 3:1-16** Is this done out of love? Human viewpoint says, How could it? If we are understanding love properly than we must say that at the pointing view of the context that what is described was the best that God could do for Israel, that is judge them for their unfaithfulness and rejection of truth. He did this because He loved Israel so much.

Look at Acts **13:9-11** This also is not done out of vengeance or vindictiveness on Paul's part at all. This was again what was best for this one in the light of eternity. In fact the proconsul believed the gospel as a result of what occurred (13:12).

What is done by so many today is to attempt to define Biblical love by the cultural use of the term love. What is considered to be love in our present culture where it is defined by the movies, TV, the soaps. Cultural love is not Biblical love, it is totally different and we must not confuse them. Unfortunately far too many Christians do.

In fact this is a common mistake made by many in other areas of interpretation of Scripture, take something out of our culture and zap it back into the Bible and try to read the Bible in the light of our culture instead of the culture being read in the light of the Bible. This violates basic hermeneutics, isogogics (principles for interpretation of Scripture).

**Love as directed toward God** is the mental attitude of appreciation for His character and plan as revealed in Scripture, which manifests itself in obedience. Having correct thinking based on the Word results in the capacity to make correct actions in life.

Love as directed towards others is the mental attitude that demands that we do what is best for them in the light of eternity no matter what it costs us. (have thinking then action)

What Paul is saying is that knowing what is right and best according to the standard of the Word of God for someone else and then doing it, even when you would rather be doing something else.

That this love existed in the Philippian believers is seen in the phrase "*your love*".

It is something that never reaches a saturation point and this is seen in that this love is to grow and increase continually, that it may abound more and more. Paul is stressing here that this love is not to become static but to continue to increase to overflow.

Did you notice what the love is related to or based on? Not feelings or emotions. Definitely not what most are referring to when they use the word love - libido and hormones.

Paul points out that this love is to be based "*on real knowledge and all discernment*."

*Real knowledge* (epignosis ἐπίγνωσις) speaks of a developed, full knowledge of truth. The Word of God sets the boundaries and the parameters of love. The emphasis of epignosis here is practical knowledge which provides the basis for discerning what is right, what is correct. The bottom line is that it speaks of filtering our aims, objectives, ways you choose to live in life, thru this developed knowledge of God's Word. Look at Col. 1:9-10.

*All discernment* (pas aisthesis πᾶς αἴσθησις) perception or discernment here is used in reference to moral and spiritual perception with an emphasis on practical application of truth, the developed knowledge in one's life. (applying epignosis in real life situations)

Notice just how neatly this all fits with verse 10 *so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;*

## OBSERVATIONS

1. The love that Paul refers to that we are to have and express towards God and others is something that is to be constantly increasing. This is true both in capacity that is thru an increase in knowledge and also in application.

The greater your knowledge of truth the greater your ability to filter life's experiences thru it and to put them into perspective, that is from the Divine viewpoint.

2. Without a developed and expanding knowledge of truth, love easily becomes flabby and

misdirected. This puts relationships on the wrong basis - wrong standards.

3. The lower the amount of epignosis, this developed knowledge, the lower the capacity one has to express this love in their life.
  4. This knowledge is to be prayed for as seen here and in Col. 1:9-10 and Eph 1:17.
  5. It is acquired primarily thru face to face teaching in a Local Church where the Word of God is taught expositionally.
  6. Knowledge without love is nothing. 1 Cor 13:2 (ουθεν = worthless, nothing - an absolute zero from God's perspective)
  7. Knowledge without love leads to arrogance, 1 Cor 8:1-2. Together leads to edification - building one up spiritually.
- Note:** Knowledge is proud that it has learned so much. While wisdom is humble that it knows no more!
8. Knowledge plus love leads to the manifestation of the fruit of the spirit Gal 5:22-23 and the character traits listed in 1 Cor 13:4-7.
  9. Love never acts in disregard of the scripture, of truth. If we do, we are no longer operating in the sphere of this love.
  10. Love must also be applied with great discernment, spiritual insight and perception.
    - what may be the correct way to approach and to deal with someone may be totally inappropriate with another; must evaluate each situation. [result of discernment]
    - Love is not always doing what others want you to do but what is best for them doctrinally.
    - you must assess each situation very carefully before jump.
    - Often things, opportunities appear to be legitimate, but after closer scrutiny are not worthy of your support.
  11. Proceed with caution, confer with others and pray for wisdom. So that you make sound applications on the basis of discernment.
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#### News Note:

If America needs a lesson in what happens when an Islamic presence is tolerated for long in a country, it need look no further than the example

of Lebanon. Lebanon has a rich history that reaches back thousands of years, but its recent events are a telltale sign of the python-like strangle hold of Islam. In recent history, Lebanon was set up by France in the 1940's to be a Christian-majority democracy. The Islamic invasion came in earnest after the 1967 Arab-Israeli Six Day War when Yassir Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization terrorists found refuge in southern Lebanon and set up a "mini state." Today, the terrorist group Hezbollah occupies that position.

Under the Christian majority rule, Beirut, the capital of Lebanon, was considered the "Paris of the Middle East", prospering as the gem-stone example of prosperity. When the PLO entered the scene, however, all things changed. And the country has been rife with instability, terror, civil war and insurrection ever since. Now, fierce fighting has broken out in Lebanon as Hezbollah has taken to violence because of a government probe of a Hezbollah communications network thought to have--go figure--terrorist ties. Hezbollah terrorist leader Hassan Nasrallah said the action amounted to a declaration of war by the Lebanese government.

Beginning with the PLO, Lebanon was colonized by radical terrorists. At first, they entered the nation as so-called "refugees", but soon their true motive of occupation was revealed. Political disruption, crime, violence, terror, and civil war followed in its wake. Now the Iranian-backed Hezbollah terrorist group is challenging the government in a bid to take over all of Lebanon. This is a clear example that Islam and free government cannot exist together. The United States, as well as many countries in Europe, should take heed of this accelerated example of Islamic colonization and violence. While Lebanon always had its population of Islamists, when that population became strong enough, Islam turned to violence.

The United States government has a policy to treat Islam as a peaceful religion, allowing its colonization of America to expand at an alarming rate. While terrorist training camps and Islamic sleeper cells breed the offspring of terrorism, the government embarks on a Homeland Security policy of banning words like "jihad" and the coupling of words like "Islamic terrorists" so as to appease Islam and not "unintentionally legitimizing" terrorists with religious standing. Problem is, Islam is a religion of terrorism. Jeremiah 51:14 says, "Surely I will fill thee with

men as with locusts and they shall lift up a battle cry against you." The Trojan horse has landed, beware of the politically correct bearing terrorism disguised as religion.

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-- A woman who is a physician told this story about her then four-year-old daughter. On the way to preschool, the doctor had left her stethoscope on the car seat, and her little girl picked it up and began playing with it. "Be still, my heart," thought my physician friend, "my daughter wants to follow in my footsteps!" Then the child spoke into the instrument: "Welcome to McDonald's. May I take your order?"

-- If it's entirely for free, it's a gift; if it is in relation to something we have done, it's wages. Either it's totally underserved, or it's proportional to our effort. Remuneration for works can be generous; but it can never be of grace. What

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#### Mothers Always Knew

##### *Psalms 8:2*

Out of the mouth of babes and infants You have ordained strength, because of Your enemies, that You may silence the enemy and the avenger.

You wouldn't guess that a 36-hour-old infant would be able to teach grown scientists about the Creator - especially by making faces. But that is exactly what has happened! The Bible teaches that each of us is an individual, made by God, and known to Him even before we are born. However, those who have tried to promote the idea of chance and natural law have portrayed the newborn as a blank slate upon which experience writes. To the humanist mindset there is no such thing as normal human expressions like a smile - everything is learned.

But now researchers, studying 36-hour-old babies, have learned differently. They now confirm that smiling is a natural, human reaction - something that babies do even before they are born. Babies also recognize human faces and can tell the difference between human expressions. Babies also connect expressions they see with their own

expressions. Even the newborn in a crib is not kicking and crying without meaning. What's more, scientists have confirmed one other thing that mothers have always known - babies really enjoy those silly faces and funny sounds we use to get them to laugh.

The Bible clearly offers a better view than modern humanistic evolution when it defines each human being, from before birth, as a unique individual, made by a Creator Who loves us and seeks our love.

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#### Subject: WHAT DID HE SAY?

Hot on the heels of his explanation for why he no longer wears a flag pin, presidential candidate Senator Barack H. Obama was forced to explain why he doesn't follow protocol when the National Anthem is played.

According to the United States Code, Title 36, Chapter 10, Sec. 171, During rendition of the national anthem when the flag is displayed, all present except those in uniform are expected to stand at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart.

#### Obama

'As I've said about the flag pin, I don't want to be perceived as taking sides,' Obama said. 'There are a lot of people in the world to whom the American flag is a symbol of oppression. And the anthem itself conveys a war-like message. You know, the bombs bursting in air and all. It should be swapped for something less parochial and less bellicose. I like the song 'I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing.' If that were our anthem, then I might salute it.'

Is this really someone who should even be considered for the Presidency???