

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."



Do You Have Love's Perception?

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Philippians 1:10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; (NASB)

After praying in vs:9 that their love would keep increasing in real or developed knowledge of doctrine and that as they developed a Biblically based frame of reference that they would have the insight and discernment from that knowledge to make practical application of that truth in real life situations.

Now in verse 10 Paul lays out two purpose clauses, that define the objectives he sees that are important for the believer as we utilize the truth learned under love as we noted last time, that is, under the ministry of God the Holy Spirit illuminating that truth for us.

The first purpose stated is so that you may approve the things that are excellent.

The word for approve is dokimadzo (δοκιμάζω) to test for approval. This is a word that was used of testing metals, assaying ore, to determine whether it met specified standard's.

Here Paul is talking about having the insight/discernment to test for approval "... the things that are excellent." To what is Paul referring here?

The word for excellent diapherw (διαφέρω) has two meanings:

#1 to differ; to be superior to, be worth more than (Matt 6.26);

#2 abstract idea of *the essential things, the things that matter or are of greater value* (Rom 2.18) therefore what is excellent or vital.

You can look at this word as it is used in the context then 2 ways, but as you think about it they're really 2 sides of the same coin.

#1 to test for approval things that differ; and therefore discriminate between things. [i.e. chocolate and vanilla]

#2 - to approve the things that are excellent/vital

The idea here that Paul is working to get across to us is that the testing here is for approval between what is better and best; not between what is right and wrong. You don't need to test for approval what is clearly marked out by scripture as outside the parameters of the will of God. You have some epignosis, some developed knowledge of truth -- you know that stealing, lying, adultery, living together, is always wrong!

But here the emphasis is on having the insight from doctrine, the frame of reference of truth to test for approval between what is **better and best**, what is important, what is vital. Often the line of demarcation is not so clear, not so readily visible as it is for what is right and wrong.

What do we do then? How do test for approval? What is the standard? Rom 12:2 gives us a clue as to how this is to work. Paul states that as believers our norms and standards of our conscience must be renewed by the intake of truth illuminated by the Holy Spirit so that they might prove (dokimadzo) what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Also this brings into view the points made in 1 Cor 6:12; 10:23. There are some very pertinent questions we need to often ask ourselves before we make decisions. The greater the decision to be made, the more you need to think it through as to where it fits with your relationship with Christ.

The second purpose clause "... in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ..."

Paul is praying that they would prepare now for the day that is yet to come - the Rapture of the Church and the Judgment Seat of Christ (JSC) the first order of business after the rapture.

The word *sincere* is eilikrines (ειλικρινης) which means pure, genuine, without hypocrisy. The idea is that of moral purity in one's relationships.

The word eilikrines is made up of two words, first eile (ειλη) meaning sun and secondly krines (κρινης) meaning to judge therefore together they mean to judge by sunlight. The background for this word is that it was used to indicate the evaluation of clay pots that were on sale in the market place. The buyer would hold up the pot or bowl towards the sun to see if there were any cracks in the pot covered over by wax. The sun would illuminate the cracks if they were present. Therefore the buyer was able to see if what he is buying was pure and genuine or if they were defective and then was able to make an informed choice. The choice for the excellent.

Paul's desire for his readers is always to be rightly related to God, to be in fellowship. But he is also concerned that their relationships with others be what God would desire, according to His standards. He uses the word blameless aproskopos (ἀπρόσκοπος) which means to be *blameless, void of offense*. It does not mean to be sinless. In the active use it means to not cause others to stumble spiritually while in the passive sense it refers to one stumbling themselves.

Paul's point here is that the Love that we have, we have seen is to be growing & abounding, and it is to be defined by an ever increasing and developing knowledge of doctrine so that we have insight and discernment to make right decisions so that our lives are morally pure and therefore we do not cause others to stumble spiritually.

Then once again Paul references the day of Christ. Paul's prayer focuses on the daily life of the believer from salvation, all through life as we grow and advance in love until the day of Christ, when we meet Him face to face.

As translated by Dr. Vincent in his helpful word studies of the New Testament: (9) "*And this I pray, may your love increase and abound in ripe knowledge and perceptive power, (10) that you may apply the right tests and reach the right decisions in things which present moral differences.*"

Things to think about:

1. The result of having a developed knowledge and discerning love is that we might be competent to ascertain what is important and vital in our lives.

2. The love that Paul is describing here is able to determine, to give insight as to what really matters in your life as a believer in Christ.

The idea is that we need to evaluate and come to a conclusion about what we should devote our physical, mental and emotional energies to?

3. If we apply the principles of BD that we're learning we will be able to ascertain what are the things that are excellent - that are superior - what is vital for our lives today as believers.

Today we are flooded, bombarded with information from many sources, more so than in any other time in history and its still advancing.

With all this "info" available we must have the insight, the discernment to evaluate all that we're exposed to sort out what is spiritually superior, the excellent and to reject what is not.

Many activities from the divine viewpoint perspective will not be worth the time/energy and quickly become a distraction and a snare. Leading us away from a vital relationship with Christ.

4. What we must do is to always test these things in life by the developed knowledge we have to determine their true worth.
5. Failure to evaluate all things by truth, developing knowledge, will lead us in all kinds of directions contrary to the will of God.
6. Believers who remain steadfast in their devotion to the Word of God, avoiding at all costs that which is unworthy of their support, will arrive on that day sincere and blameless, that is without hypocrisy and not having caused others to stumble or themselves to stumble over false issues.
7. This condition of sincerity - blamelessness will result when the believer is positive to truth and remains intellectually honest while continually being exposed to sound teaching in a Local Church.
8. One of the keys is to live our lives in the light of the day of Christ, in the light of eternity, and therefore on the basis of what really matters from God's perspective.
9. What we should be seeing from this prayer is that the provision is there and will always be there to do just that, to take us from here to there, from salvation to glory so that we can stand there before Him blameless, genuine, without hypocrisy.