

Will I Help Answer Paul's Prayer?

Text: Philippians 1:9-11

Introduction:

1. It is clear that the apostle Paul had a wonderful spiritual focus (cf. 2 Timothy 4:6-8; Philippians 1:23; etc). His desire for other's spiritual welfare cannot be overemphasized (Romans 9:1-4; 10:1).
2. In our text we find the prayer of one who sincerely seeks this spiritual welfare for his readers. Since there is no doubt as to Paul's goal for us - the question comes in two ways: First, will I help answer Paul's prayer? Second, will I help to make my life what the inspired writer knows it ought to be?

Discussion: *To answer his prayer...*

I. We Must Have Abounding Love (9)

1. Love is that attribute which sets us apart from others (John 13:35)
2. Paul's prayer is that it be guided, not by mere emotion, but by knowledge and judgement – something far different than what many follow!

II. We Must "Approve Things That Are Excellent" (10)

1. Approve: the word is variously translated as discern, prove, examine, try
2. Things that are excellent: the word is variously translated as better, of more value, more excellent
3. Paul is praying that we not just examine things and avoid the wrong, or even that we choose the right over wrong. He goes further and prays that we will have the desire to examine and prove things, seeking that which produces the highest good.
4. The result of such noble examination and choices will be that we are "sincere and without offence"
 - (1) Sincere: literally judged by the sunlight and found pure
 - (2) Without offence: a life "void of offence toward God" (cf. Acts 24:16) and not being a stumbling block to others
5. Paul's prayer is that such a life of choices be found in us until the Lord comes – perseverance!

III. We Must Be Filled With The Fruits Of Righteousness

1. One's mind is drawn to Galatians 5:22-23 where we read of the "fruit of the Spirit" which is typical of those who "live" and "walk in the Spirit" (25)
2. Such a life is accomplished "by Jesus Christ," through us having a proper trust and relationship with Him.
3. Paul then gives the result of such a life of righteousness. Far from being self serving, it is done "unto the glory and praise of God."

Conclusion:

1. Of course we realize that the prayer being offered by the apostle Paul as he spoke by inspiration, the benefit of following it is beyond question. But it is also easy to see personally the benefit of such a life to each of us.
2. Thus the only question left is – *will I do it?*