

14/06/09 (pm) - Series on Philipians - Sermon 8

A Pastor's Prayer (1)

Phil. 1:9-11 (Text: 1:9)

Theme: Love characterised by knowledge and discernment is to be preeminent in the life of the Christian.

1:9-11 is the climax of Paul's
introductory remarks.

It is a prayer.

The prayers of a man of God are
worth looking at!

The Apostle's Prayer—What he Prayed (1:9)

We must understand the terms:

1. **Love.** The object is not specified so love is taken comprehensively.
 - the Philippians' love for each other
 - love for neighbour generally
 - love for God

2. Abound more & more. Overflow with unremitting progress.

3. Knowledge. In the New Testament, this word always refers to knowledge of the things of God, *cf.* Eph. 1:17; Col. 1:9-10; Phile. 6; Phil. 1:9.

4. Discernment. Greek word used in the *Septuagint** (22 times in Proverbs). It means the ability to apply knowledge in life situations.

*Greek translation of the Old Testament

Paul is praying that the love of God through Christ would increasingly characterise the lives of the Philippian Christians and that the warp and woof of that love would be increasing knowledge of God and discernment in all situations.

Five important observations:

1. Paul is praying for the progressive sanctification of the Philippian Christians. In sanctification the Holy Spirit and the Christian co-operate, *cf.* Phil. 2:12; Rom. 6:11-14.

2. Paul, before talking to the Philippians about certain matters, prayed for them. *We should follow his order!*

3. Christians must pray 1:9 for those entrusted to their spiritual care.

4. Knowledge of God will always lead to increased love for God.

5. Knowledge of God and discernment will act as checks on behaviour prompted by love. Love needs knowledge to know what to love and discernment to know how to love.

Knowledge of God and discernment should, for example:

- stop a Christian dating a non-Christian. *Cf.* 2 Cor. 6:14;
- stop a Christian from watering down Gospel truths about God's judgement;
- shape the outworking of love in evangelism, discipleship, etc.

- Knowledge is found in the Word - spend time in it!
- Discernment comes from knowledge and through asking the Lord for it, *cf.* Jas. 1:5.

In Nak Presbyterian church in Seoul prospective elders are examined on Bible knowledge, theology, church history and common sense!

Conclusion—Answered Prayer!

*God grant that the Apostle's prayer
will be answered in our lives in
these days.*