

Philippians - June Class

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[0 : 00] And we welcome you to our June class, and we are finished with the background material that we intended to provide for Paul's letter to the Philippians, and we spent quite a bit of time in Acts 16 dealing with the dramatic events that transpired there.

And now we are ready to undertake the actual book itself. So what you have before you is a printout of a couple of pages from the 26th translation New Testament, which is one of my favorite references in connection with this.

And I want to remind you that the bold print that is at the head of each verse is the King James Version. And then the other translations that follow are as indicated with their abbreviation.

The ASV is the American Standard Version, and the CON is Coney Bear's Translation, and then there's Weymouth's Translation, and then the GSPD is Goodspeed, etc.

So each of these have a little bit different way of recording the text that may speak to you in a way that some of the others don't. And a lot of times these are just preferences or opinions of scholars, and some of them are good and some of them are not.

[1 : 29] But anyway, it gives us a variety, and we're grateful for that. So let's look to the Lord. Thank you, Father, for an opportunity to be together again and to focus upon what you've provided, not only for us, but for tens of millions of believers throughout the world throughout these past 2,000 years.

We are indeed a grateful people that our God has been pleased to reveal yourself as you have here in this document. It is for our admonition, our learning, our blessing, our enlightenment, and we are so grateful for it.

Enable us now as we enter into the text to understand not only the meaning but the implication thereof. We commit this time to you with thanksgiving in Christ's name. Amen.

Philippians is frequently referred to as the epistle of joy. Indeed it is, and Paul will be saying things like he writes these that our joy may be full. And I'm sure that as a believer you would agree that there is no one that has a greater cause for rejoicing than those who are in Christ.

It's a beautiful thing to realize that no matter what is coming into your life or has been in your life or what is ahead in your life, however negative it might appear, however devastating, however great the loss, however great the pain that may be produced, there is always under that, above that, beyond that, the abiding knowledge that God really is in charge.

[3 : 09] That is our basis for joy and rejoicing. It is our perspective that we have in the sovereignty of God and the fact that he really does do all things well.

So whatever it may be that we are dealing with that is of a painful variety, kind of thing you would have never volunteered for in a million years, just be reminded that heaven has a perspective that we do not.

And we are constantly called upon to embrace that perspective because it's the only one that's really true and real and abiding, and we are grateful for it.

So let's begin with verse 1, and you feel free to interrupt me anytime you may have a question. Paul and Timotheus, servants of Jesus Christ to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi.

Immediately he qualifies his audience. People need to understand that this book, as well as all the other books that are in the Bible, are not really addressed to or intended for unbelievers.

[4 : 17] They are for believers. This is for the saints. And the things that Paul is going to be saying here apply only to the saints. They are the separated ones.

The hagios is the word in the Greek. And it simply means the ones who have been picked up from the mass and set aside from the mass to an exclusive purpose.

They are the separated ones. The sanctified ones, sometimes called saints. And that's precisely what you are if you are in Christ Jesus.

To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi. With the bishops and deacons. And the word for bishop in the Greek is episkopos.

It's a compound Greek word. Epi, which means upon or over. And skopos, from which we get the word scope. As in periscope and microscope.

[5 : 17] And it means when you put episkopos together, it means an overseer or one who overlooks.

That's the way that bishop is translated into Greek actually. And we know that a bishop's clerical capacity is to be an overseer or one who presides over a flock.

And the deacons, and Rames translates that overseers and ministers. Because a deacon is simply a servant.

And we ordinarily do not think of our Lord Jesus Christ as being a deacon. But in reality, he was. Mark, I believe it's 1045, says the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.

And to give his life a ransom for many. And the word for minister there in the Greek is diakonos. From which our word deacon comes. And a deacon is simply one who serves or ministers.

[6 : 28] There are several that are referred to as deacons in Acts chapter 6. When they are appointed the task of taking care of the widows. And actually what they were doing was running a kind of food bank in Acts chapter 6.

In caring for the needs of the widows there. These were the deacons. And it's translated in different ways. Ministers, assistants, superintendents, good speed renders.

Bishops as superintendents and assistants. Elders and deacons and so on. Grace be unto you. And peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, it's true. This is a very customary kind of greeting. In a sense, we would say that there was nothing really special about this greeting. Because it was just as ordinary as would be your greeting.

When you address someone with dear Mary or dear John or dear so and so. And that's kind of a standard way of approaching your audience when you open an epistle.

[7 : 33] But you will note that in all of Paul's writings. When this formula is invoked. Grace and peace unto you. You will never find peace and grace.

It's always grace and peace. Because they have an order to them. There is no basis for peace. Grace until grace has been activated. And it is the grace of God that brings salvation that results in the peace of God.

And being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. But there is no peace apart from that grace that precedes us. And if man is not a recipient of the grace of God, whether he knows it or not, he is in a warlike state against the God of heaven.

And the scriptures use the term, the unregenerate are at enmity with God. And that simply means he is not a friend. And we have a friend in Jesus.

But without Jesus, we do not have a friend. We have a judge. And he is a righteous judge. Grace be unto you, and as a consequence and peace, from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

[8 : 53] And it's interesting. The order and the meaning here of verse 2. Those who are the ones providing this grace and peace from equal persons, from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

And they are deliberately separated. And what Paul is saying is, what comes from one comes from the other. And they are equal exponents of that.

And then this verse 3 is one of my favorite verses. Because it ought to be the kind of thing that we should be able to say of every believer who has come across our acquaintance over the years.

But we all know that that's not the reality. But Paul says, I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. Isn't that a beautiful thing to be able to say?

Sometimes we encounter people of negative or nasty dispositions. People who are difficult to get along with.

[10 : 07] And we do not consider them a real asset to the body of Christ. They just seem like they are determined to create chaos and cause problems and conflict and everything.

They are agitators and dividers of the brethren. And these people exist in the body of Christ. I tend to think that they are out of sorts with people because they are out of sorts with God.

And when a man's ways please the Lord, Proverbs says, makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. So if we are out of kilter with our Heavenly Father, we cannot really expect to be in tune one with another, can we?

This is part and parcel of maintaining the unity of the brethren. And the best way to do that is to maintain our relationship with the Lord as being what it ought to be.

And nothing will serve our relationship with each other better than that. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. And as Paul is writing this, I am confident that he in his mind's eye is going back over some of the scenes and replaying some of the events and some of the interesting encounters that he had with those people at Philippi.

[11 : 27] How could he have written this without thinking about Lydia? Couldn't. How could he have written this without thinking about the Philippian jailer and how he was ready to do himself in when he thought the prisoners were going to escape and how he came to faith in Christ?

And how this one who had no feeling or compunction at all for him as a fellow human being, when he threw him into jail and the inner prison and put him into stocks, and now this same guy is washing and tending their wounds after this earthquake and this situation was over.

So you can be sure that Paul is replaying all of these things. And no wonder he says, I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. Always, in every prayer of mine for you all, making requests with joy.

And here is our first surfacing of the concept of joy. Someone has described joy as being so superior to happiness.

And we've talked a little bit about this before, but let's get it on the record. We know that happiness is dependent upon what's happening. And if things that are happening are good and pleasant and enjoyable, we're happy.

[12 : 44] And if things are happening that aren't, there's pain, deprivation, loss, reversal or something, we're unhappy. So happiness is always dependent on what's going on around us and what we're dealing with.

But joy goes beyond that. Joy is that which is deep and abiding and sustaining regardless of what's going on around you.

Perhaps the best illustration that I've ever heard of this is one with which I think just about everybody can identify. If you've ever been out on the ocean when the seas were choppy or even on a large body of water like a lake or something like that, when the waves are really churning up and it's very difficult to maintain your stability if you're on board a boat, that's what's happening on the surface.

But if you were to go down several feet under, you will find such a complete calmness of the water that you wouldn't even know what was happening up on the surface.

So we can liken what's happening on the surface to happiness and we can liken the calm and the placid effect to joy that is down under the water.

[14 : 10] So the joy has a depth to it that the surface knows not of. And once again, this only comes from knowing what you know and having the tranquility of soul that comes from knowing that your times are in his hands and he does all things well.

I remember a man who was at the time, he was an attorney in Cedarville, and you probably know who I'm talking about, Barb.

Yeah, David Haffey. I remember him talking about this. And he was involved in a very serious automobile accident. And I think it was probably en route from Zing into Cedarville or something like that.

And there had been a lot of accidents on that strip of route. And his car was turned over. I mean, one of these things rolled a couple of times and ended up on its roof.

And here he is, pinned in by the steering wheel and everything, couldn't get out of the car, going in and out of consciousness. And he said, when he finally came to, he realized the plight that he was in and how serious it was.

[15 : 22] And yet, at the same time, there was just an inexpressible wave of calm and peacefulness that just kind of flooded over him.

And I cannot attribute that to anything other than the Spirit of God ministering to him in that kind of a situation where, by all rights, he should be just coming apart, you know, discomfited and screaming and yelling and thrashing about and everything.

But there was just a settled peace that came over him. And that's something that many believers can identify with, especially in times of real difficulty like that.

Making requests with joy. Always in every prayer of mine for you all. Making requests with joy. That's that deep abiding that we are so privileged to have.

For your fellowship. In the gospel. Making requests with joy for your fellowship. Rhames translates it, on account of your contribution unto the glad message.

[16 : 41] And here's the first time we find the word gospel surfacing in Philippians. And, of course, it has to do with the good news. And the good news about the good news is it is a transferable concept.

That simply means that the gospel consists of information which can be in the mind of one person. And this very same information and its meaning and definition can be transferred to another mind through talking, through communication.

That's the sharing of the gospel. So that the one on the receiving end of the message is able to understand the same concept as the one who is sending it.

And we say when that happens, communication has taken place. But when the receiver gets a different message than what the sender is sending, that's a miscommunication.

And Paul is really grateful because these Philippians and he have connected. They have had a fellowship in the gospel so that they are thinking the same thing regarding the gospel, the good news.

[17 : 56] And you know as long as this gospel has been around, almost 2,000 years, you will still be hard pressed to find a concept that is more confusing and misunderstood by more people than the gospel.

It's amazing. And I think that we Christians must assume some degree of responsibility for that, perhaps for not speaking of the gospel frequently enough or clearly enough.

And we just kind of assume that, well, people know that. They know what you're talking about. They know what the gospel is. No, they don't. No, they don't. They know the word. They know it has something to do with religion.

They don't understand what the gospel is. They don't understand what the good news is. And these people did because Paul had made it quite clear. Your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.

Being confident of this very thing. And that is a precious commodity. Confidence. Confidence.

[19 : 07] The only one who is really entitled to confidence about anything is somebody who really knows that issue. To know what you're talking about gives you confidence.

I remember back in speech days, my first exposure to speech at Cedarville College was a complete disaster.

I flunked speech and flunked English. And the chemistry with the teacher was not good. But anyway, the second year when I had to take it over, my assignment was, and this would have been 1958, 8 or 9, and the speech teacher wasn't a speech teacher at all.

He was a science teacher. It was, well, name slips my mind now. His first name was Dale. But anyway, they just plugged him in there because the first teacher of the year, he only lasted one year and he was gone.

Dale Thompson. And he replaced the guy that gave me the F in English and gave me the F in speech, although I probably deserved a vote. But anyway, I was assigned the task to speak on the subject, five-minute speech, to speak on the subject of Matsu and Kimoi.

[20 : 29] Those names probably don't mean a thing to you. But Kimoi, at the time, was Kimoi off the coast of China.

Today, or no, I'm sorry, it was Formosa. And Matsu and Kimoi were attendant islands. But Formosa was the name that it went by then.

Today, it goes by the name of Taiwan. And everybody knows it as Taiwan. And the big issue back then was whether or not the United States should commit troops or military, hardware, etc., to defend Formosa should Red China decide to invade and take it back.

Because you'll recall that Chiang Kai-shek, some of you can recall, Chiang Kai-shek, when the Reds took over China, fled the mainland and went to Formosa and established a new government there.

And several thousand people left the mainland of China and joined them. Well, China has forever since, and still does, consider Formosa or present-day Taiwan Chinese.

[21 : 42] And it belongs to the Chinese. And different times they've threatened to actually take it back by force. So the issue was, should the United States do that if China made a move on that?

And I researched that thing out the Yazoo. I mean, I went up and down and back and forth and read articles and everything. And I could not believe how well-read I was and able to speak on that subject of Formosa.

And here was this timid sophomore who was scared to death to give a speech about anything for any length of time. And I only had five minutes to present the case for this.

And I stood up there and rattled that stuff off and wowed the whole class. It surprised me more than it did anybody. But, you know, the only reason I was able to do that was because I knew the material.

That's what provides the confidence. You can take some dear old country bumpkin who considers himself not knowing anything about anything, but he knows this.

[22 : 44] He knows tractors. And he's worked with tractors. You get him in front of an audience and he can talk about tractors till the cows come home. Every kind of tractor, it's weakness and strength and everything else.

And he'll just go on and on and on. He's got confidence because he knows what he's talking about. Every believer ought to have that kind of confidence in talking about the gospel.

Because if you're not sure of it, what makes you think they'll want to buy it? I'm not talking about a cockiness or an arrogance, but I'm talking about a confidence so that you can say, this is something I know to be true and I can recommend it to you with complete assurance.

Well, we need to be confident of that. And confident that he who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

And I am satisfied that at least in part what Paul has in mind here is the fact that God who has established salvation in the soul of these people at Philippi is going to perpetuate it and complete it.

[24 : 12] This is an excellent verse addressing the security of the believer. It isn't he who has begun a good work in you is counting on you to continue it.

So don't fumble the ball. That's not what he's saying. He's saying the one who has begun this good work in you is going to continue it. And I'm confident of that.

That provides a real basis for peace, inner peace, stability, confidence. This gives us a rock solid platform for what we believe and why we believe it.

He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. And I take it that he's talking about until the time that Christ returns. And Taylor renders it that way.

He will keep right on helping you grow in his grace until his task within you is finally finished on that day when Jesus Christ returns.

[25 : 14] He will continue until the day of Jesus Christ. So even though the work of salvation is accomplished in us with finality, we all know that the growth factor means we are still people who are under construction.

But our salvation is not under construction. It is just our growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ that's under construction. That's what's ongoing. That's what is not yet finished.

But so far as our salvation is concerned, of course it is. Even as it is meet or appropriate or justifiable for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart.

This injects an element of feeling and emotion in this thing. And we Christians need to remind ourselves that while it is true, biblical Christianity is a thinking faith.

And it works out of the intellect. Nevertheless, it is not divorced from emotion and feeling. Because feeling and emotion is a very important integral part of our humanity.

[26 : 34] Not just our intellect, but we are a package of feeling and thinking. And Paul, I think, is at least referring to this. I have you in my heart.

That's the feeling. Inasmuch as both in my bonds. And in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. And the word defense here in the Greek is the word apologia.

A-P-O-L-O-G-I-A. Apologia. And it's the word from which our word, apology, comes. And a Christian who is apologizing for the Christian faith means he is defending it.

It doesn't mean he is saying, Yes, it's true, I'm a Christian and I'm really sorry about that. He's not apologizing in that way. He is defending the faith. And this is the way the word is used in theological context.

In the defense or the apology and confirmation of the faith. When you apologize for the faith, it means that you give good and sufficient reasons to justify your position.

[27 : 49] You are an apologist for Christianity. Ravi Zacharias is an apologist for the Christian faith. And Josh McDowell is another.

And Norman Geisler is another. And there are several out there. And atheism has its apologies, too. You know, they are those who set forth their case.

Richard Dawkins is an apologist for atheism, if you will. And he gives what he thinks are sufficient reasons for embracing the position of atheism.

So every belief, whether it's political, religious, or what, has its defenders. We could say Rush Limbaugh is an apologist for conservatism.

And Barack Obama is an apologist for liberalism. It means that they defend their position and they take that position. Every believer should be an apologist for the Christian faith.

[28 : 49] And all this means is we ought to be able to give an answer to everyone who asks us a reason for the hope that is within us, with meekness and with fear.

This is 1 Peter 3.15. Was there a comment or question, Carolyn? Before I've heard you say often and never really understood it, you've used the word apologetics. You've been talking just in years past.

And so that really is apologetics is the study of defending your faith. Exactly. Exactly. And it's considered a real, well, there are college courses offered in Christian schools, you know, on apologizing for the faith.

But it is misleading because it means almost the opposite of the way people interpret the word. If you are an apologist for Christianity, and it does not mean what the common terminology means.

This is the defense and confirmation of the gospel. And I know, I think it would be unreasonable to expect every believer to devote themselves to being a premier apologist for the faith so that you can stand and debate the apologist from the other side.

[30 : 05] But we ought to be comfortably conversant with our position so that we are not terribly intimidated. And, you know, I'm satisfied in having talked to believers about this for so many years.

This is a principal reason why so many Christians are intimidated and afraid to be vocal about their faith.

They are scared to death that somebody is going to ask them a question and they can't answer it. And it's going to make the situation look worse, not better.

Because we tend to think that we have to have answers to everybody's questions. But we don't. One of the answers that I have relied on profusely over the years, and it has really served me well.

I've never known this answer to backfire. It always seems to satisfy every questioner, at least for the moment. And the answer is, I don't know.

[31 : 12] I don't know. There's nothing wrong with not knowing. I mean, who thinks you know everything anyway? We needn't give people the impression that they can ask us anything they want and we've got an answer.

Well, sometimes the answer is, I don't know. That's a good question. I don't know. But I'll tell you what, I'll do my best to research that and I'll try to find out and get an answer and I'll get back to you on that.

And then do it. Don't just forget about it. So I think we owe people that. People who have honest questions about the Christian faith deserve good, honest answers.

And we ought to make it our business to have them. And, you know, you don't have to take a course in college apologetics and you don't have to buy a whole stack of books. But there are numerous aides and helps that are available, written in layman's language, that will help you to express the Christian faith and to be able to do it in a way that is comfortable to you.

So I've been thinking about developing a radio program. I've got more work to do with the one I've got. And I was going to call it Apologetically Speaking because I thought just the title might pique a little bit of interest there.

[32 : 27] What's this about, you know, Apologetically Speaking? Now, a Christian who is somewhat plugged in will understand what Apologetically Speaking is, but somebody else probably would not. So Paul is talking about the defense and the confirmation of the gospel.

20th century New Testament says, and in the work of defending and establishing the good news. Now, I've even heard of some people using this cop-out. And one of my heroes of the faith is Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

And he is often quoted not only about this, but about a whole host of things. And I remember reading one time where Spurgeon said, I think it is foolishness to try and defend the Bible.

That's like trying to defend a lion. You don't have to defend a lion. Just let it out of its cage. And he'll take care of himself.

And to a certain degree, that's true in the sense that the word of God is powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword. And all you have to do is get the word out. Because after all, it isn't your word or my word.

[33 : 45] And it isn't our cleverness of speech. And it isn't our convincing arguments that God has promised to bless. It's his word. It's his word that has the power.

It is the power of God through faith unto salvation. Not our arguments or anything. So, in a sense, the good Dr. Spurgeon is accurate.

But at the same time, when people have honest questions about the Bible, like, you know, what's this stuff in the Bible about God commanding the Jews to kill all these people, murder all these people, men, women, and children?

Doesn't the Bible say something about that? How do you explain that, anyway? Is God some kind of a bloodthirsty tyrant, bully in the New Testament, where he engages in genocide and wants these whole tribes of people wiped out?

What are you going to say to somebody like that? So, these are good questions. And, you know, the Bible doesn't give an answer like that. The Bible doesn't say, well, the reason God did this is thus and so.

[34 : 53] It doesn't spell it out like that. So, it kind of leaves it up in the air, and we ought to research those things. Now, don't ask me the answer to that, because I'm working on it now, okay? So, right now, I don't know.

But, yeah, I do. Someone, I don't recall who it is, but someone has authored a book. I've got it in my library. I just haven't had time to read it yet. But the effects of it is, is God a tyrant or a bloodthirsty tyrant, et cetera?

So, I'll let you know after I've read the book, okay? And he continues saying, in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye are all partakers of my grace, or you are partakers with me of grace, or joint partakers of my favor.

We have shared together the blessings of God, Taylor renders it. Now, that's an expression that is strictly old King James.

We don't go around talking about bowels too much. And it is better rendered by these other translations. And it's talking, again, about feelings.

[36 : 06] This refers to the same thing that Paul says, I have you in my heart. And here he talks about in the tender mercies of Christ, or tender heart, tender affections, et cetera. And this, again, is feelings.

And I pray, this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more. This is, you know, Paul is, I think he is just under the inspiration of the Spirit of God.

He is just bearing his soul here. I don't know exactly how long it had been since he had been at Philippi. But it is apparent that he really misses these people.

And I think Paul was in some cities where he didn't miss them too much. But here he really missed these people at Philippi. And he says, I greatly long after you all.

William says, I never stop yearning for all of you. That, to me, is perhaps one of the saddest things that accompanies being a believer.

[37 : 12] It's saying goodbye to other believers, parting from their company. And sometimes it's when we send them on to heaven.

And sometimes it's when we just know by sheer geography and time and responsibilities that the likelihood is we're not going to see this person for maybe a long, long time.

Or when a loved one sends a loved one off to possibly harm's way. Those are really hard, gut-wrenching times.

They are sad times. And we long for their presence. We yearn, yearn to see them again. And I have often said that this is going to be one of the immensely enjoyable things about heaven.

Goodbyes will be off limits. There won't be any need to say goodbye to anybody. Just no goodbyes there. That's going to be wonderful. We sure say plenty of them here, don't we?

[38 : 19] Long for you all. And I pray that your love may abound yet more and more. Or your love yet grows stronger and stronger.

That you will overflow more and more with love for others. And this is the real biblical agape love. This is not the syrupy sentimentalism.

This agape love is best defined as doing for the object of your love that which is in their best interests.

Whether you feel like it or not. We are to do the loving thing not because we particularly feel loving toward them.

But because we love them with the agape love. And let me put this in a little perspective if I may. Because this is where it really gets difficult. Love is an act of the will.

- [39 : 28] The commitment that accompanies love is an act of human volition. When Paul says, for instance, in Ephesians 5, that husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church. It does not mean lover when you feel like it. It means lover even if you don't feel like it. So there is the power of the volition and the will.
- But it doesn't stand alone. Because feelings are there. And the tendency is to go one way or the other.
- And this is where we get into trouble. Because the common thing for the flesh to do is to allow the feelings to dictate the doing.
- That's part of our fallenness. That's what we as believers need to address and attempt to overcome. Because when we do the right thing, even though we don't feel like doing it, we are allowing our intellect, our will, and our volition to be the engine.
- [40 : 53] And we are making the feelings to be the caboose. And if we don't do that, we let the feelings lead and the intellect comes along behind.
- And let me tell you something. If you haven't already discovered this, I have discovered it. And that is this. It's a lot easier to let the feelings take over and run the show than it is to pay attention to the intellect.
- Why is it that when we know what the right thing is to do, we don't do it? That's because we're being dictated to by our feelings.
- Instead of what we know is better. We've heard the expression before, you've used it to, well, you knew better. You knew better, but you didn't do it. Why not?
- Yeah, we all know better. We all know the right thing to do. This is Romans 7, where Paul says, you know, what I would do, what I know I ought to do, that's not what I do. But what I know I shouldn't do, that's what I do.
- [41 : 59] Oh, wretched man that I am. What's going on here anyway? Well, we are this complexity in our being of the feeling and the thinking.
- And when we are walking in the flesh as opposed to walking in the spirit, the feeling will win every time.
- The intellect and the knowing doesn't stand a chance. And the reason is because we feel with our feelings and we think with our mind, but we are so quick to respond to what we are feeling as opposed to what we are thinking.
- This provides the avenue for depression. It provides the avenue for simply going astray from the will of God.
- Perhaps, best example I can give of this, and I do it out of love and out of fondness, and I know she would heartily approve of it.
- [43 : 10] And you may have heard me say this before. But when Barbara and I met, and we courted furiously for four months, and she had agreed to marry me, and she knew she wasn't supposed to do that.
- But she was allowing her emotions and her feelings to run the show as opposed to her intellect. And her mother could say things to her like, Barbara, you know this isn't right.
- And she would have to agree with her. But, and we've always got that but, and that's where, but, but, but, you know, and we just want what we want.
- And we allow our feelings and the emotions to take charge and override what we know is the right thing to do.
- We can justify it. We can make an exception for it. We can excuse it. We all, we're all good at that. We're all good at that. It's part of our, part of our fallenness.

[44 : 16] And I am satisfied that that has always been a problem ever since the fall. So, what we need to do is to lock on to doing what we know is right, even when your feelings and your emotions would dictate otherwise.

And let me tell you something. That is really hard to do. And that's why more people don't do it. Because it's really hard to do. It's just a lot easier to go with the feelings and the emotions.

Oh my. Well, if your love abounds more and more, you will be more loving toward one another, and you will be growing in love toward one another.

And this is the love that is activated, led by the volition and the intellect in doing and knowing what is right.

And when you treat somebody in a loving way, you may not feel very loving toward them at all. You may feel anger or disgust or whatever. But if you're going to do the loving thing, you will allow your will to override those emotions.

[45 : 32] And as I've said, that is not easy to do. Your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in discernment, understanding.

Rhames renders it in personal knowledge and all perception, that you may approve things that are excellent. This is a wonderful thought.

Approving things that are excellent. Look at the way these are rendered here by other translations, and they're very, very helpful. What Paul is talking about here is having the ability, having the ability to set your priorities and to focus on the things that really matter.

Approve things that are excellent. Alfred renders it that you may discern. Rhames may be by putting to test the things that differ or distinguish the things that differ.

Teaching you to distinguish good from evil. That's an excellent idea. Being able to have a spirit of discernment.

[46 : 42] Enabling you to have a sense of what is vital. I call that knowing the issues in such a way that you are able to major on the major issues and minor on the minor issues, not vice versa.

And when we do that, we enter into skewed thinking that leads to wrong conclusions, and wrong conclusions lead to wrong actions, and wrong actions lead to bad consequences.

Williams renders it so that you may always approve the better things. Knox, that you may learn to prize what is of value.

All of these are excellent. And that you may thus bring you the gift of true discrimination. We hear that word used so often in a no-no light.

It's not nice to discriminate. You shouldn't discriminate against anybody. Well, let me tell you something. You ought to discriminate continually. All you're doing when you're discriminating is making a judgment.

[47 : 52] Making a valued judgment. You can't go through life without discriminating. If you buy a Ford, is the Chevy guy going to say, you're discriminating against Chevys, huh?

All you're doing is making a choice. And there are certain things that we ought not to discriminate against, and we know one of the big ones today, ever since the Civil Rights Movement has been so successful, is we are not to discriminate against people on the basis of their color.

That's wrong. But we ought to discriminate against people on the basis of their behavior, their morality, their truthfulness, whatever.

You need to have... No one should have a more discriminating, discrete, discriminating spirit than a believer.

We ought to judge all things, evaluate all things, assess all things, and be able to size them up in connection with biblical standards. This is developing a biblical worldview.

- [48 : 59] That will make you discriminating, and you will see what is wrong with the world, and you will be able to identify it and avoid it. That you may be sincere and without offense, pure and blameless, so that you may be men of transparent character and may be blameless.

Taylor renders it and to be inwardly clean, no one being able to criticize you. So, these are all great thoughts.

Well, our time is about gone. I want to make sure that there's some time for Q&A;, and you haven't indicated that you have any, but I don't want to assume that you don't. Are there questions or comments, something you'd like to inject?

I would welcome that. Anybody? Yes, Carol? I always do. Well, that's okay. I'm sorry. I appreciate that. I know this uses the American Standard version as, you know, the first thing in a lot of these, but when he gets down to verses 10 and parts of 9, he doesn't really use that.

And I thought maybe in my New American Standard, I've kind of interpreted this just a wee bit different because of the way that it's written. In verse 9, in the American Standard, it says, In this I pray that your love may abound still more and more.

- [50 : 27] It doesn't stop there. It goes on, In the real knowledge of all discernment so that you may approve the things that are excellent in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ.

I look at that as being my love is for the knowledge and the discernment to know what I should be doing in order to be blameless until Christ comes.

Yeah, well, I think that's right on. Absolutely. That's right on. And that's just another good rendering. Yeah. That's helpful. Okay. Because it goes, it says that in, you know, it doesn't stop.

It says, May abound still more and more in the real knowledge and discernment. Yeah. And so it should be my love of of gathering that knowledge so that I do, I'm able to discern.

Absolutely. That's the immediate context. And it's exactly what it's saying. It's a love for the truth, a love of the truth. And there is no way that you can live out truth if you don't know the truth.

- [51 : 33] You are not going to live out the truth with dumb luck. I can tell you that. It will be with intelligence that you live out the love. And only in pursuing, having a love, having a passion for the truth, I think that's another way of saying it, that having, developing a passion for the truth and learning truth will result in this kind of thing.

And that's, that's Paul's prayer for them. And by the way, he almost never prays about or for material things. But it's always for these spiritual realities, these spiritual blessings.

And I think the meaning behind that is he is simply under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, he's devoting his time and his writings to the things that matter most.

And the things that matter most is not stuff. And it's not even physical health. It's eternal, spiritual verities that really matter the most.

That's what guides everything. Thank you for that. Anything else? Anybody? Yes, Marie?

- [52 : 45] In defense of the gospel reminds me of 1 Peter 3.15 where Peter says, and be ready always to give an answer to everyone that, that make it your, a reason of the hope that is in you.

Mm-hmm. Yes, he did. That's, that's probably the premier verse for Christian apologists is 1 Timothy, or 1 Peter 3.15.

That's a wonderful verse to commit to memory. Great verse. Other thoughts? Anybody? Well, we've made a dent in the first chapter and we've gotten basically through 10 verses or so and we'll continue this, the Lord willing, as we meet together and that will be, that will be the second Friday in, can you believe we're saying July?

Second Friday in July we'll meet back here and pass the word and help folks to remember it. You know, I do have one regret that this is on Friday. We talk about it on Sunday and people remember it then.

But Sunday to Friday is a long time to remember something. And if you don't keep a calendar like I do, and then sometimes I don't even look at my calendar, I still miss it. But try to write it down and remind others that we'll be meeting here on the second Friday in July.

[54 : 07] So, let's pray. Father, we are truly grateful for what you've been pleased to reveal in your word and anything that may have been uttered of the flesh we want it to pass away and come to naught.

What has been provided by the Spirit of God, would you seal it to our hearts so that it will be there for future use and we know that the opportunity will certainly arise.

Thank you for all of your grace and beneficence and gifts that you've bestowed upon us. We know they all come through our Lord Jesus Christ. Pray in His name.

Amen.