

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

Expanding Your Love Limits

Philippians 1:9-11

1 When Michelangelo was in his studio one day he stopped and stared at one of his student's paintings. After he reflected upon the painting for awhile he suddenly took a brush and wrote across the canvas the word "Ampius"; "larger"! He wasn't condemning what his student had done. It was a fine piece of work as far as it went. He wanted the same quality of product, just larger.

You may be proud of being a member of a loving and caring congregation. but you must not be complacent. We need to continually expand our love! 2 One of the goals the Lord wants for us in our Christian lives is for our love to grow. 3

Philippians, chapter 1, verses 9 through 11, gives us this insight. **And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes**

through Jesus Christ — to the glory and praise of God.

Notice some things this scripture says about expanding your love limits. ⁴ First, let's look at . . .

I. The Extent of the Growth – v9

Verse 9 describes the extent of the growth. ⁵

It must **overflow**. ⁶ The phrase “abound more and more” in the original language ¹ means “more than enough, excessive”. You turn on the faucet in the kitchen sink to do the dishes and then get sidetracked. When you return to the sink you discover the water “abounds more and more”! You have to mop the floor! ⁷ The goal is for your love to increase consistently and continually. ⁸

It must overflow **in knowledge**. ⁹ The word knowledge here ² is “an enhanced knowledge based on your personal experience”. The first time you give

¹ καὶ μάλλον περισσεύη.

² επίγνωσις.

unselfishly and sacrificially it's hard to do. ¹⁰ But the next time it becomes easier. Each unselfish giving experience produces enough joy to encourage that same act of love next time. ¹¹

It must have **depth of insight**. ¹² Love, God's style, is an intelligent act of your will. When you see someone in need and try to satisfy that need, your emotions may not be that much involved. They may just follow the act of giving. ¹³ Most of us base our love on emotions don't we? God bases His love on needs! ¹⁴

Love, God's style, is sacrificial. So, we follow our Lord's example. The Father gave the most precious thing He had; His son. The Lord gave the most precious thing He had; His life. God wants you to be able to give whatever it takes to satisfy a need! ¹⁵

Next, verse 10 describes . . .

II. The Reason for the Growth – v10

The reason for the growth. There are four reasons listed here. ¹⁶

The first is so that you can discover what **really matters. ¹⁷**

Establishing relationships count more than the accumulation of things! His dad would give anything for little Billy not to be serving time in prison. But he did very little to direct Billy in his formative years! A woman is devastated by her divorce but did very little to build a relationship with her husband when she was married! ¹⁸

Our worldly society pressures you to have your priorities all messed up. Do you spend as much time building character in your child as you do making enough money to get him the things you never had when you were a kid? Do you spend as much time studying the Word of God, praying and sharing your faith as you do in recreation? ¹⁹

The second reason is so that you may be **pure**.²⁰ The word pure³ comes from the words “sunshine” and “judge” in the original language. The idea is that God wants to inspect you like a jeweler would inspect a diamond in natural light.²¹ God wants you to continue growing into a pure image pleasing to His eyes.²²

The third reason is so you may be **blameless**.²³ The word blameless⁴ is “someone who is not a rock in someone else’s path”. He doesn’t cause someone to stumble.²⁴

In Romans, chapter 14, the church there had a couple of divisive issues it was dealing with. The congregations had people from a Jewish background who had observed strict kosher laws all their lives. Their meals consisted mostly of vegetables. They worshipped with Gentiles (people from a non-Jewish background) who ate meat. This was a divisive issue because eating kosher was connected with the Jewish

³ ειλικρινής.

⁴ απρόσκοπος.

faith. As Christians their eating habits were not connected to their faith. ⁵ Since what they had for supper was religion connected to the Jews, it was a big deal to them. For the sake of love and harmony maybe the non-Jewish background people could abstain from their freedom of eating meat for the sake of their Christian brothers. Don't put a stumbling block ⁶ (remember "blameless") in your brother's path. The other similar issue was the observance of religious holidays. Abstain from your freedoms in Christ to extend love to your fellow Christians. ²⁵

⁵ See Genesis 9:2-3 - The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. and Acts 10:13-16 - Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat." "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean." The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

⁶ Romans 14:13 - Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.

The fourth reason is so that you would **be ready for the Day of Christ.** ²⁶ The Day of Christ refers to the Second Coming of the Lord. ²⁷

Lord Jesus told the story in Matthew, chapter 25, ⁷ about what would happen when He comes back. He says that the King of Kings will separate everybody into two groups. One group He will invite to receive their inheritance which is the eternal kingdom prepared for them. To the other group He will say, “Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into eternal fire”. His explanation for this separation was **For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.** ⁸ When the King is asked when was it that we did or did not do these things for you, the King’s reply was, **whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine,**

⁷ Matthew 25:31-46.

⁸ Matthew 25:35-36.

you did for me. ⁹ Preparation for the Second Coming is developing your character into a loving one to others. ²⁸

Finally, verse 11 describes . . .

III. The Means of the Growth – v11

The means of the growth. How do you get this to start happening? Verse 11 continues, . . . **filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ — to the glory and praise of God.** ²⁹

It's done by allowing the Holy Spirit in you to begin producing **the fruit of righteousness** in you. ³⁰ A partial list of this fruit is found in Galatians, chapter 5, verses 22 and 23, **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.** ³¹ If you remain loyal to the Lord Jesus by obeying His Word and trusting Him, He will produce the fruit! ³²

⁹ Matthew 25:40.

The fruit that is produced in you is **to be used for God's praise and glory**. ³³

The reason for this is **we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.** ^{10 34} When you do the good works, you are praising and glorifying the Lord through your actions. ³⁵

Are you ready to expand your love limits?

<http://biblelifemessages.org/>

¹⁰ Ephesians 2:10.