

## **PRAYER**

### **Praying Like Paul**

by Jon Jacobs, 2007

There is no more important balance to maintain than that of “truth and love.” Our Christian walk must be poised in a steady equilibrium of both truth and love. When we lean to either one or the other, it creates tendencies in us that can be very un-Christ-like.

I know that I have met professing Christians who have all the right doctrine, but whose behavior and treatment of others is all together contradictory to the doctrines they so vehemently defend. Someone once said “your life speaks so loud, I can’t hear what you’re saying.” They love being right, they love quoting the Reformers or their favorite Bible teacher, but in fact they are unloving. These kinds of people can leave inestimable damage in their wake. On the other hand, there are those who act as if Christianity is nothing more than warm-fuzzies. They have embraced a form of religion that is really nothing more than shallow sentimentality. They often actually despise doctrine, feeling that doctrine somehow diminishes their understanding of what “love” is.

Having said all of that, I am moved by the prayer of the Apostle Paul for the Philippians believers. Paul prays, “And I pray this, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:9-10). Paul knows that excellent love -- sincere love -- blameless love must be rooted in real knowledge and all discernment. Conversely, Paul also knows that real biblical knowledge and discernment will always be evidenced by love.

In fact, even Paul’s prayer itself is a demonstration of the important balance of “truth and love.” His love for the Philippians is obvious. He has committed himself to pray unceasingly for them. But notice that when he prays, he prays about knowledge -- knowledge of the truth of God’s word. He also prays for “all discernment” which is the application of divine truth. Paul is praying that God will keep His people in abounding love, real knowledge and all discernment. He understands how important this relationship of truth and love is to the health of the church.