



SERIES: Philippians (May / June)

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Thursday, May 6, 2021

Scripture: Philippians 1:9 / Romans 5:5/1 Corinthians 13:4-7

TITLE: All You Need Is Love

“All you need is love.” That’s what Ewan McGregor told Nicole Kidman in the movie and musical *Moulin Rouge*. McGregor said, “Love is like oxygen... ..Love lifts us up where we belong. All you need is love.” What you may not know is, he was telling this to a singer, who has been promised to a Duke for a large sum of money. For McGregor, and many today, love is a feeling that flares up, but can quickly die out, with or without prompting. But true love, biblical love is so much more. What do I mean? Listen to Paul’s words in Philippians 1:9 (NLT):

“I pray that your love will overflow more and more and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding.”

Paul’s writing the Philippian church, whom he cares for greatly. He starts his letter with a prayer of thanksgiving for this family who shares in his burdens. And now he transitions from thanksgiving to petition. And the petition is that their love may overflow more and more.

This begs the question, “What is love?” Well, according to 1 John (4:8 and 4:16), God is love. Romans 5:5 (NLT) says, “For we know how dearly God loves us because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.” So, love is selfless and giving. In fact, Paul uses the word *agape* here to describe love - It is selfless and giving.

Love is also intentional and decisive. Love is not a free-for-all. No, love is a choice. Love has boundaries that can and should be honored. That’s why Paul would give a brief but thorough discourse on love in 1 Corinthians 13: “Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud ⁵ or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. ⁶ It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. ⁷ Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance” (13:4-7).

Love is selfless, intentional, decisive, and it’s discerning. That’s why Paul says, “...you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding.” Love is not blind. It’s discerning. How can we become discerning? By coming back to the Bible to renew our minds. By submitting our preferences and presuppositions to the mind of Christ. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2, “For, ‘Who can know the LORD’s thoughts? Who knows enough to teach him?’ But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ” (2:16).

Paul is praying for the church’s love to increase, and that’s my prayer for you as well.

So here's my challenge for you today: ask yourself, "Where is my love deficient?" We discovered that love is selfless, intentional, decisive, and discerning. Where can your love grow and abound more and more? For me, I can be more selfless in my love - especially to my enemies - as Jesus told us we should love our enemies and do good to them.

Where is it your love needs to increase? And what will you do to increase it? Do just one thing today and see how that motion creates greater motivation for abounding love.